# THE COMMONWEAL

***A Weekly Review of Literature, The Arts and Public Affairs***

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# THUNDER IN MANHATTAN

NEW YORK has admittedly been a universe unto itself. By the nation at large it is considered a thing apart, and by inhabitants a self-sufficient polity. If the representative Manhattanite has thought of anywhere else, it has been of Washington and its—from his point of view—numberless foibles. But today this attitude is changing. The citizen whose work and wage emanates from the region between Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and Fordham is growing increasingly aware that in at least one respect Bryan may have been a prophet. He knows that his is the largest, wealthiest, most active city in the world. But it is no secret that even he confronts an accumulation of problems so baffling as to create fear and dismay.

Typical of these difficulties is the unemployment situation. Public funds and private charity have joined during recent years to carry a burden which positively staggers the imagination. Million after million has been poured into the fund which buys food, clothes and shelter for the enormous number of persons who haven't a cent on earth. The greatest social welfare organizations of which American history has record wrestle with a problem which in the long run must prove beyond solution—unless human nature develops virtues of which there are as yet few traces in Manhattan. That the relief work is actually failing at critical points has become obvious during the past two months. Investigating committee after investigating committee reports conditions which are simply heart-breaking.

The virtues needed under such conditions are sanity, charity and probity. Of these the average citizen has his share. Yet he is beginning to wonder seriously whether municipal leadership possesses them. For more than a year the rule of Tammany has been challenged. Civic investigations, the squeeze play which was worked to rid the scene of Mr. McKee, the arrangement whereby Mr. Walker was shunted off to Cannes without a decent explanation—these and more events stirred and troubled but by no means overwhelmed the voter. This voter, taken by and large, was remarkably complacent. New York was to him always the greatest city on earth, and Tammany rule was quite a bit like the gold standard. That is, one could pick flaws in the way it operated, but it


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was difficult to say what could be substituted for it. Republicanism, for example, has meant to the vast majority only the triumph of Park Avenue—a nice party for the host, but not much in the way of favors for the guests.

Today a change is noticeable. That change is brought about by the collapse of the city's taxation system, as evidenced by the curious lengths to which Mayor O'Brien went to collect money. The Mayor announced that he was going to double the levy on cars owned by residents and charge a quarter for driving into town. We do not exactly blame His Honor for harboring this notion and giving utterance to it. There are several ways of announcing that you have come to the end of your rope. One is to get up and say as much—an honest method, but singularly useless in politics. Another is to effect economies, which is hard enough to do when one is elected President of the United States by an overwhelming vote and just about impossible when one is only a mayor chosen by the folks whose job it is to get the right marks on the ballots. The third way is to proclaim a tax so unpopular and bizarre that even Americans will grow annoyed on a quantity basis. This tax indicated that the Mayor, in sore need of money, had no idea where it could be obtained.

And why didn't he? Because during the past twenty years neither the city government nor the population has thought realistically and sensibly about income or expenses. While the trend was toward densely populated centers, municipal values of all sorts rose by leaps and bounds. The increment in land prices made it possible to reap tax returns adequate to cover steadily mounting costs. Necessarily the charge for both prices and taxes had ultimately to be paid out of proceeds for work which the city alone could render. Because New York was the center in which the nation's business was managed, and because work done to aid, instruct and entertain this management was extensive and profitable, New York could expand without seriously considering the cost.

Now we are witnessing the collapse of this system. The real problem is not whether the city owes a little money or even whether considerable sums are being expended for graft (though both are matters of grave importance). The underlying difficulty is that values have fallen catastrophically and that this tumble may in part be due to factors apart from the depression as such. That increased taxes cannot be levied on real estate the price of which is constantly going lower is obvious. To do so would be to repeat in sober every-day life the story of the goose which killed the golden egg. But above and beyond that is the fact that the services rendered by New York to the nation are costing too much money and that buyers are going elsewhere. At present statistics are lacking to show the trend in detail, but in at least several departments of activity we possess clear proof of a loss of business to other places. It would be incorrect to say that evidence now exists to show that the modern movement of concentration has been halted, and that the tide is turning again the other way. But it is quite possible and would accord with the experience of history.

At any rate, the lesson is obvious. The modern American city—of which New York is the foremost example—needs to do some sound and fearless thinking. It needs a citizen whose idea of the community imposes a measure of responsibility upon himself. Next it cries for leadership at least relatively aware of what is going on. We realize that this is in a particular manner a challenge to Catholics. They are numerous and influential in New York. The history and fate of the city have been to a great extent in their hands, and the record is by no means as bad as is sometimes supposed. Just now there is every reason to believe that something vastly better than the existing order must and can be found. We do not think this order notoriously inadequate and corrupt, though under the former Mayor's beaming smile it seemed in real danger of becoming so. We think it, rather, blind to the facts and incompetent to deal with them. In so far as the Catholic body is concerned, it is idle to speak of "influence" under a system which sends Mr. Mulrooney to a beer board, Mr. McKee to a counting house, and Mr. Smith to the duties of a collector of alms. These men are among those whom we, and no doubt citizens of all groups, would be glad to entrust with the duties of government. A political order which casts them aside is not one meriting endorsement.

## WEEK BY WEEK

THE HOT weather found Congress toiling near the close of a session which produced an almost unprecedented quantity of legislation. It is too early to summarize this or to estimate its probable effect, but there can be little doubt that good ideas are mingled with bad ones in the usual human way. The nation seems committed to new directions in industry or government, and has by no means gone all the distance it may be expected to travel. Meanwhile all eyes have turned to London, where a conference to regulate world economic and financial problems finds all countries sparring for advantages demanded by irate nationalistic groups. The problems, as we have said elsewhere, are several and important. The mood which dominates those participating is everything but optimism. We were, however, relieved to note that the question of international debts was raised immediately. That is after all the fundamental problem, action upon

Beyond our Borders

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which years ago would have obviated at least some of the disasters from which all peoples have suffered collectively. If coöperation on this important problem cannot be secured with some measure of good-will, it is rather useless to expect that minor difficulties can be surmounted with promptness and efficiency.

MEANWHILE President Roosevelt has inaugurated something akin to a "new deal" in diplomats. Following the appointment of Mr. Claude Bowers to Spain, it was announced that Professor William E. Dodd had been selected for the important post in Berlin. This is an excellent choice, for the man honored is a level-headed scholar who is likewise familiar with Germany and its language. Professor Dodd was among the first American historians to question the assertion, once current, that Imperial Germany alone had set the wheels of war in motion. Quite as encouraging—and, of course, especially gratifying to ourselves—is the appointment of Mr. Lincoln MacVeagh to the Ministry of Greece. Few men apart from academic life know the classic world better, and none could take a deeper interest in what happens round about Athens. We believe these nominations mean a decided step forward. If diplomacy serves any useful function nowadays, it certainly must be an instrument of cultural as well as political and economic relations. The exchange of cultural amenities may be the most needed international commerce.

Events in Austria

POOR little Austria, where summer is usually divided between Mozart and Strauss, rumbles once again with political disturbance of a kind which might almost be termed operatic if it were not basically so serious. Nazi tactics in Vienna and other cities copy the formula so brilliantly employed by Dr. Goebbels in Berlin, and the fundamental purpose is about the same. Rampant attacks upon Jews, a series of tantalizing and rather crude practical jokes, threats of assassination—in short all the symptoms of that strange *Kinderkrankeit* which is ravaging the Teutonic world—introduce the gospel of Aryan supremacy into the otherwise relatively tranquil Danube land. But Austria has witnessed a number of similar proceedings. During the first year of Chancellor Seipel's reign, much the same things were happening, with the Socialists in the active parts. It is saddening to note that Chancellor Dolfuss's efforts to stamp out Nazi bacilli find the Catholic body split wide open. While the *Reichspost* is frankly opposed to the great Adolf and everything he represents, the very influential *Schönere Zukunft* seems to have gone over to the Nazi cause. From very many points of view it seems as if the resolve of the present government to combat nationalism in this form were bound to succeed. But one can never tell.

Cash Confidence

NO DOUBT one of the most heartening and realistic demonstrations of public confidence in the present government at Washington was the recent oversubscription for the new Treasury security issues. The government offered $1,000,000,000 worth of these issues and in financial circles there had been expressed some trepidation whether the public which might support the government with popular approval would come forward with hard cash. Not only is there a well-known scarcity of the latter at present, but also there had been more than one veiled threat in high financial places that the government's abrogation of the gold clause in securities which had specified payment in gold would result in a practical vote of no-confidence in new government issues. The facts of the matter are now in the record: the public oversubscribed the issue five times. Total subscriptions amounted to $5,650,000,000. This is not only reassuring as an indication of the nation's faith in President Roosevelt's policies but also as an indication of the existence of a sizable back-log of capital resources in the country. With the present administration's proper concern for the rehabilitation of the suffering millions of men and women who have lost the means of helping themselves and who are the large distress margin of our corporate body politic, national well-being will reassert itself, slowly probably, but soundly, thoroughly, completely.

Fraudulent Relief Claims

WHEN relief administrators abuse their office, it is beyond doubt a very bad thing. But is it not, in a sense, even worse when the neighbors and friends of the very poor, though themselves not actually in need of relief, pretend to be so in order to divert to themselves a share of the city's too scanty emergency funds that would otherwise go to those with whose miseries they are familiar? One of the glories of the common people has always been their Christlike charity toward each other. The examples of it are innumerable and heroic, the exceptions fewer by far than those found among the more fortunate classes. Whenever a case of fraudulent relief claims becomes known, the public reaction to it has in it an element of disappointment and incredulity which reflects this knowledge. Perhaps the most flagrant case (a recent one) to be brought before the Special Sessions of New York during the present hard times, was treated by the presiding justices with a severity which seems to embody this reaction likewise. A man who, though he lived in a tenement district, was not poor—he and his wife had $7,500 in the bank

ST. CHARLES SEMINARY
CARTHAGENA, OHIO

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—was able by misrepresentation to draw relief and rent money for several months. When the fraud was discovered, he repaid the entire sum; nevertheless, he received a maximum sentence of three years in prison. The sentence is drastic, but not disproportionate in view of the city's plight and the peculiar heartlessness of the fraud.

**Trees for the Times**

ONE OF the symbols of President Roosevelt's administration in the midst of this country's and the world's breakdown of so many things that have seemed solid and real, will be a tree. The taking of hundreds of thousands of young men and of the embittered, unemployed war veterans out of those places that are crowded with the destitute, giving them employment and the honor of contributing $25.00 a month to their fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters who have no other means of support, and giving them a summer of work with trees, cannot but bear good. There is the story of the visitor from Mars who was rushed from one enthusiastic mass meeting to another, shown water works, museums, classes of diligent children and many modern factories, and who timidly plucked at the sleeve of one of his official entertainers as they were rushing in an automobile from one place to another and said, pointing to some woods beyond fields, "Who are those people? I like those people over there very much." This suggests perhaps some of the things which our modern youth may learn from the trees, a little of that calmness, that steadiness and self-containedness of which they are such noble examples in the scheme of God's creation. Motion, with its abstract multiplication of speed, has possibly been carried to too great extremes in the thoughts of our generations. To stay and grow like a tree may be a fine thing, a rich, full life and shelter-giving.

TO THE 1,000 farm boys who are members of the Future Farmers of America and who were visiting Washington to inspect the activities of the Department of Agriculture, the President recommended trees. He advocated the timber lot that used to be a feature of most farms. He pointed out that today the nation is depending on a timber supply of virgin forests sufficient to last only another thirty or forty years. Each farm he said should provide at least for its own lumber and timber needs. Besides these things he emphasized again things that are of the essence of the life of trees, of having roots in the earth. "You will be doing something more important than becoming millionaires," he said. "You will be building up for future generations the soundest kind of American life and will, I think, know that even though you do not make a great deal of money, the odds are a thousand to one that you will never starve. And you will always have a roof over your heads, and you will have good educational facilities, and that is a great deal more than many in industrial life can be assured of." We do not doubt he meant more than schools when he spoke of educational facilities here, and we recall that for industry too he keeps emphasizing the vision of rural industrialism, which might be described as industry in the midst of trees.

**Too Many Doctors?**

AMONG the most significant of the reports presented before the annual meeting of the American Medical Association in Milwaukee, as noted in the press, is one having to do with America's present overproduction of physicians. Without having the actual figures before one, it is impossible to say on what per capita allowance the alleged surplus of 25,000 physicians is based; but if "the ratio of physicians to the general population is twice as great here as in England, France and Germany" (to quote the newspaper paraphrase of the report on this point), the existence of a surplus, it seems, cannot very well be denied. These countries stand so high in medical science that only the belief that Americans are twice as unhealthy as Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans could equalize the discrepancy. For ten years, it appears, the number of graduates from our medical colleges has been mounting, until their number greatly exceeds the death rate of practising physicians. In support of these statements, one fact will leap vividly to the mind of even the layman least instructed in this matter: the grave and increasing concern which the responsible body of physicians has been making public over the inability of a large number of their profession to earn an adequate living. The various projects for socialized or group medicine (incidentally, these terms should not be used synonymously) stem from this fact; and though the fact has other causes, a superfluity of doctors may quite logically be one of them. A severe limitation of enrolment in our medical colleges, as is urged by the report, will help to solve the problem numerically. It should also make a qualitative difference which superior members of the medical fraternity will be the first to welcome.

**Wonders of the Garden**

WITH us in the East, the height of the garden season approaches under especially auspicious circumstances. Sun and rain combine this season to make veritable gluttons of plants, which grow buxom and prolific in a way we have seldom seen these last years. And so one has opportunity to marvel once again at a succession of miracles as genuine as any on record—miracles which might well bring some happiness into lives blighted by trial and despair. Notice

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for example the climbing roses, prodigal of beauty and fragrance in a manner rivaling the bounty of spring herself. We here do not, of course, possess all the treasure of the South. Yet what a change since old days, when Dorothy Perkins and associate ramblers were all our store! There is Silver Moon, holding up white blooms like pert and immaculate maids, a rose in which there runs a "native" American strain. Or that beauty with a difficult name, Mme. Gregoire Staechelin, offering large red and white cups of fragrance, opulent in a genuinely Spanish way. Or a bush covered with fairy-like medallions of pale gold—Mermaid, enticing as its name, a little difficult to nurse through Long Island winters but incomparably gracious. And the red splendors quite rival these. There is the wild radiance of Scorcher, creature of fire and perfume, sent here from Australia, and the deeper, duskier tone of Dr. Huey, offering clusters of crimson velvet bloom. If there were time we might sing the praises of Nora Cunningham, Emily Gray and others, even the names of which are haunting to such as know. But what a store of pleasure is here available to those to whom spring this year gives a chance to linger in the country.

### Aha, Mr. Rivera!

AN AMUSING and possibly significant little incident has been dug up by Joseph Lilly of the New York *World-Telegram* with regard to the recent excitement when the Rockefellers decided that they did not like the frescoes Mr. Rivera was painting in their Radio City building. It is significant in the sense that anything which calls attention to the fallibility of human nature, no matter what ism is involved, is always mildly significant and may be conducive to that gentle humility which is the entrance to a real Catholicity of spirit. Mr. Rivera, it may be recalled, was excited because his self-expression as an artist was not given the completest liberty and because thereby a work of art, he said, to which posterity was entitled was being destroyed. A number of self-styled liberals took up the epithetical cudgels for Mr. Rivera. Now the enterprising Mr. Lilly discovered that the French artist, Jean Charlot, an ardent Catholic, by the way, who does not hesitate to express his faith in his murals, once upon a time was commissioned to paint a wall in the center of the Secreteria de Educacion in Mexico City. He was in fact the first fresco painter in modern times in Mexico and led to the vogue for this art of recent years in that country which inspired Señor José Visconalos, Mexican Minister of Education, to look for some native talent and employ José Clemente Orozco and Mr. Rivera to express the true Mexican spirit. What did Mr. Rivera do? He ordered M. Charlot's mural destroyed. He had workmen hack away the plaster and put in new plaster which he painted to suit his friend Visconalos. What say the self-styled liberal friends of Mr. Rivera of this? Does not this denial of an artist's right to self-expression, the devastation of his work and disregard for the opportunities of posterity to look and see, enrage them? They have not been heard from but probably they are so liberal that they feel that only the liberals should be permitted such liberties.

## THE WORLD CONVENES

THINGS happen so rapidly these days that a commentator is more than usually handicapped. His analysis of events may be proved worthless by some unexpected event, or the effect of some especially grave conclusion may be swept away entirely by a sudden change of political weather. It is important, we think, to note that this is not caused by the fact that much progress is being made. Governments everywhere, beset by crowds of suffering or imperiled people, are frankly experimenting. They know (or at least the best of them know) that the trend of future society is not controllable. What they are really trying to do is to remove worthless conventions which may prove obstructions to a possible new tide of industrial activity.

On June 12, for example, the World Economic Conference will convene in London. We say "will" because an editor cannot write on the day his magazine makes its appearance. The issues to be discussed are chiefly three: What can be done to create a uniform and stable medium of exchange? How can the credit structure—the practice of borrowing and lending with reasonable security and at a fair charge—be healed of its major woes? How can some obstacles to the movement of goods in the international market be removed? It may be said that nobody possesses the answer to these questions. The information available is simply a succession of theories which assume that if this and that were agreed upon, such and such consequences would follow. But the theorists differ amongst themselves, and the interests with which they deal are far too disparate to permit of immediate harmony. In other words, there surround the Conference a series of utopias any one of which would be interesting to try—if enough people really wanted to try it.

The question therefore arises: is the assumption that human society can function internationally a utopia, a mirage, on a grand scale? Some people think so, among them Dean Wallace B. Donham, of the Harvard School of Business Administration. Commenting upon the steps which Sir Arthur Salter believes necessary if the world is to recover from the depression, Dean Donham says frankly that "to me these assumed necessities are not practical idealism, but a counsel of despair." Yet he is a sane anti-internationalist (if one can

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grant that there is any such thing). The difficulty lies in the constitutional inability of the human being to keep his convictions within reason. And it is only when one sees the nationalist in popular form, as he appears for example in certain Hearst editorials or in Mr. Garrett's contributions to the *Saturday Evening Post,* that one appreciates how alive the query put above actually is.

Internationalism is, by and large, the product of the war. At that time the United States, though it had previously acted as banker and police assistant to South American nations, stepped up its production in every field in order to supply the needs of a Europe fighting a great battle. Agricultural produce, raw materials and manufactured goods were demanded in such unprecedented quantities that the status of the largest factories and the smallest farms was changed. In exchange capital flowed to this country, to be loaned back afterward when the tasks of reconstruction confronted the war-ridden nations. The total effects were two: first, the values placed upon productive machinery in this country, whether in lands, resources or industries, rose to heights justifiable only on the assumption that the abnormal demand for goods would continue; second, trade and financial liens tied Europe and America together in a quite unprecedented manner, so that the term "creditor nation" came to involve the need for political and diplomatic activity of a kind unknown previously.

After 1929, the arrangement thus effected began to prove less and less viable. The reasons are doubtless many, nor is it necessary to catalogue them. Suffice it to say that from the American point of view two things happened: first, the productive machinery which had been geared to an "empty" world market turned out too much as soon as Europe began to wax productive, with the result that capital values shrank, fear prevailed, and unemployment grew by leaps and bounds; second, the money reloaned to Europe could not be repaid in specie, so that repudiation of war debts and moratoria were unavoidable. Argument about both events is possible in various ways; but there is no one who doubts that the "system" crashed in record-breaking style. The World Conference is meeting to consider a few consequences of that crash.

Now we seem to be on the verge of deciding whether to abandon internationalism, root and branch, or whether to go ahead and build up a "national" economy. Of course it is quite unlikely that a clear-cut commitment to one alternative will be forthcoming. This is a world governed by the law of compromise. Yet it is worth considering momentarily the value of both theses. From the American point of view, the internationalist has to his credit a number of important and attractive facts: the immense civilizing value that lies in the development of cultural relations with the Old World, its literatures, arts and languages, particularly by reason of the diversified origins of our people; the eventual sanitation and pacification of world society, as the only permanent assurance of well-being to our own polity; and the outlet for American ingenuity and enterprise that is provided by trade between nations. He may also assert that internationalism was exceedingly profitable while it lasted, and argue that the reason why it failed to endure must be sought in a series of mistakes rather than in his theory as such.

The nationalist believes that "God helps those who help themselves." He thinks first of all of unemployment and of the collapse of the domestic market which follows. It seems to him wise that imports of merchandise should be limited to what cannot be produced here, and that the export trade problem of the United States is not of major importance. If the vast loans made abroad are lost in the shuffle, so much the worse. Dean Donham argues, for example, that since the prices of our own common stocks have fallen there is no reason why the face value of foreign securities should remain the same. He thinks that we were prosperous before the war behind high protective tariff walls, and that we can become prosperous again. Of course it may be that we were not so well-off then as is now fondly imagined, and that conditions have radically changed.

However all this may be, it appears evident that the questions up for discussion at the Economic Conference are of importance to both sides. Surely no nationalist, however ardent, can desire that the present currency tangle should long continue—or desire, in his suspicion of international effort, that the powers refuse to discuss in concert what can be done. Again, who could fail to hope that some serious effort be inaugurated to settle the whole problem of indebtedness and of credit generally? To be sure, war debts are not on the agenda, but they will be discussed just the same. Finally, we ought to think twice before committing ourselves to iron-bound protectionism again. If there is no middle position on this question, it differs from all other questions ever proposed to the human race.

The real trouble with us has always been inability to think and act moderately. When we go international, we let Mr. Wilson knock the spots off the ball. When we go national, we bar the door and hide in the basement. It seems just as true to say that an American who thinks of some other country first is a fool, as to say that an American who thinks of America only would not have understood Columbus when he cracked the famous egg. Twenty years ago we lacked enough men familiar with world conditions to go round. Today we have them. It seems incredible that there should now be no use for them.

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# ALUMNI AND CULTURAL ACTION

By LOUIS J. A. MERCIER

*Graduations have been in order and suggest the perennial question: "What happens to the alumnus as a corporate entity?" Professor Mercier analyzes this matter in the following paper, stressing the need for "keeping in touch" and explaining how it can be done. The Catholic alumnus in particular is dealt with, since the author believes that "even with alumni only half aroused to the possibilities of their concerted action, the outlook for Catholic Cultural Action in the United States could be changed overnight."—The Editors.*

THE APPEAL of THE COMMONWEAL for special support, and the campaign recently launched by the Catholic University toward the beginning of an adequate endowment, have brought to a head questions which should be uppermost in our minds in this Jubilee year. Are our American Catholic laymen, and, in particular, the alumni of our Catholic colleges and universities, alive to their privileges and to their responsibilities?

There are, it is true, many causes which solicit their attention. The parish, the missions, local charity work, all have their claims upon them. Yet is it not also true that, in virtue of the special educational advantages which they have enjoyed, theirs is the privilege and the responsibility of keeping specially in mind the agencies which are the indispensable means for the development and the diffusion of Catholic thought: our Catholic institutions of learning and our Catholic press?

No doubt, we have all been seriously hit by the depression. But, nevertheless, in most cases, our situation is still far superior to that of our immigrant forebears who built our churches and our parish schools. In proportion as we are enjoying today the fruit of their sacrifices, we should be able to make sacrifices of our own. The question then rises whether we have lost their spirit.

In spite of considerable pessimism which has come to light on this subject, may we not hope that such is not the case? Is it not rather that we are not yet awake, as fully as we might be, to the needs of the hour, and that we have not yet visualized the necessary steps to meet these needs, because the objects which should arouse our zeal cannot readily be brought to our collective attention?

Our forefathers had their goal straight before their eyes. They needed a place for worship, a school for their children. There was the lot to be purchased in their midst, the basement church to be erected, the indispensable parish house, later the steepled structure to proclaim to the community that here was another settlement of Catholics on the march of the nation westward. Community spirit could be aroused to such an extent that, in some cases, even non-Catholics were glad to contribute, that there might be in the land yet another center for the organization of a decent standard of citizenship based on the recognition of the God of all mankind. But when we come to the question of the support of our higher Catholic institutions of learning or of our Catholic press, we pass from local to national concerns which, for most, must remain abstractions, until they are brought home to them; and which, consequently, must lack the driving appeal of the group in actual physical contact, easily reached, easily enthused.

Ours then is a more difficult task. We must first learn to get in touch with one another for mutual stimulation. How can this contact be established most expeditiously? We are, *ipso facto*, members of the alumni associations of our respective colleges. Are we active members? How far is it possible for alumni in general to attend alumni reunions? Associations of some five thousand members often cannot muster more than two hundred at their annual meetings. Can it be otherwise? Probably not. The calls of life are so many. And when long distances intervene, is it even desirable? The money necessary to come to a meeting could be used to better advantage in promoting our causes.

How then can we keep in touch? An alumni magazine or bulletin for each alumni association would seem to be the answer. With such a magazine, an alumni association stands constituted, permanently in touch. Meetings and activities of various kinds may further be initiated, but the magazine is always there, not merely to record alumni news, but to keep each alumnus aware of the progress of his college and of others, not to speak of Catholic thought in general. Such magazines are not difficult to establish where they do not already exist, since they can be published as quarterlies for about one dollar a year. An alumni moderator, designated by the institution as editor of the review, an editorial board recruited from alumni in various fields, wide-awake to the currents of the time, and these alumni magazines could quickly become a chain binding our Catholic intelligentsia together and insuring a means of quickly concerted action.

We should realize that this action would primarily benefit ourselves, not only collectively, but individually, for action is the supreme proof of vitality. If we are prone to sit back and enjoy inspirational sermons, and talks, and all the wealth of our inheritance, while we do nothing to

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further the growth of our institutions or to help disseminate our thought; then, we should meditate on the precept that it is better to give than to receive. To receive without a corresponding quickening of activity is to court chronic sluggishness and, eventually, even the incapacity to receive. To give is to establish a current between the supply which God is ever pressing upon us and the needs of His Kingdom on earth. Catholic Action not only needs us, but we need to take part in Catholic Action, if we would remain alive as Catholics. When we are shown a definite way of being active for the spread of the Kingdom, our reaction should be one of gratefulness.

Now, if the special province of Catholic alumni, as such, is evidently Cultural Catholic Action, the appeal of THE COMMONWEAL and the call of the Catholic University should specially arouse us. Both these institutions are actually pleading for their very lives. They are still in need of those indispensable endowments which are to be the foundation of their future freedom of expansion. To a large extent, this is also the case with our cultural institutions in general.

What can our Catholic alumni do about it? There is no hiding the fact that almost every type of Catholic Action, for laymen at least, is reducible to terms of money, and, individually, the average citizen, Catholic or non-Catholic, has little to spare. But if individually we are mostly helpless, collectively we can be very strong. A rough estimate would probably place our Catholic college graduates at a hundred to a hundred and fifty thousand, since several of our older institutions have about five thousand graduates. It would not be too much to ask that each of these graduates make the sacrifices necessary to put aside $1,000 a year for Catholic Cultural Action, say $5.00 for a Catholic review and $5.00 for educational endowments. This would mean a million to a million and a half dollars available each year. At least half of these alumni could give more without serious sacrifice, and at least 10 percent, especially among the older, could easily give $25.00. A minimum of $2,000,000 therefore could be contributed to Cultural Catholic Action, each year, without serious sacrifices, and with full possibility left of contributions to other causes. With a greater spirit of sacrifice the amount could probably be doubled. Who can say, therefore, that it is not our fault if, today, the Catholic University still has such a small endowment that it is a shame to mention it; or that THE COMMONWEAL has to plead for $26,000, when this small sum would insure the permanency of a review, which is preëminently a layman's review, and which has won the respect of every thinker in the country, non-Catholic as well as Catholic? Is it not clear that even with only $2,000,000 available, each year, for the expansion of our Catholic culture, in a few years, we could do wonders for ourselves and the nation.

In fact, we could do so with much less. One of the quickest ways of raising our status in the country is the development of higher scholarship among Catholics, the training of Catholic scholars capable of productive research. Now, such training must be endowed, through fellowships and scholarships, in our universities. It is so endowed in non-Catholic institutions. In the development of Catholic scholarship, the Pontifical Catholic University at Washington is our recognized leader. It is best situated to develop the necessary institutes of research. Yet it has very few of the needed fellowships. Such fellowships require an endowment of about $20,000. An alumni association of five thousand members each contributing only $4.00 could endow such a fellowship in one year. Such a fellowship incidentally could be reserved for a graduate of its own college. Is it not clear that, even with alumni only half aroused to the possibilities of their concerted action, the outlook for Catholic Cultural Action in the United States could be changed overnight? Not only the Catholic University but our other universities and colleges throughout the land could quickly secure the necessary endowments to develop their higher work in perpetuity, and our whole Catholic educational system could move forward as a unit to the attainment of its highest ends.

All we need evidently is concerted action. Why not organize then for this type of action which alone can easily secure such momentous results? Let every Catholic college work to unite its alumni through an efficient alumni organ. Let a committee, say of the Catholic Educational Association, be entrusted with the centralizing of the rosters of our alumni associations, and with the planning for Catholic Action through Catholic alumni. We should then have, at once, the means of developing our vast potentialities, and of mustering them quickly for effective action in a given situation. We should thus, besides, come to experience a feeling of solidarity, throughout the nation, which should inevitably redound, in yet unsuspected ways, to the benefit of the whole community.

The brave pioneer generations which have preceded us, with the need clearly before them of erecting the foundations of our Catholic institutions, thought no sacrifice too great. If the means are found to bring home to their sons and daughters just what should be done now, and how it may easily be done, they, too, will rise to their own glorious responsibility. What seems to be needed is the realization that, through concerted effort, even the little which each may be able to do individually can be made to yield fruit abundantly.

No year could be more propitious for the development of the agencies necessary to make possible this concerted effort than this Holy Year.

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# WORLDLY THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM

By FRANK SCULLY

TEN YEARS ago I sat in a little Arizona chapel and watched an internationally known author, Francis Perry Elliott, then reduced by ill health to a penniless white-haired old man, wheeled into the St. Mary's Hospital Chapel and baptized into the Catholic Church. The Church felt so honored that nothing less than a bishop would do to administer the sacrament. Around us in the pews knelt many Sisters of St. Joseph. As the ceremony went on, the sun moved westward and finally lay on Frank Elliott's white head like a halo.

When it was over and we wheeled him back to his room, he said he felt as if he had come home from an unchartered voyage lasting sixty years. Not long afterward he died in a state of grace. It was a happy death for him, for he had leaned against the Vatican wall and found strength.

The other day I sat in a smaller chapel, a vestry really of the Chapel of Sacré Coeur in Nice, and watched somebody even nearer to me than Frank Elliott (my wife, in fact) and much younger, for where he was sixty she was only twenty-three, receive the same sacrament.

Two days before the baptism we had lunched with Otto Kahn, and he had paid a tribute to the Catholic Church and the fact that it was a going concern in these days of general collapse, for just then all America was paralyzed by a nation-wide banking panic. I thought at the time that a terse explanation as to why the Catholic Church, in the face of a world all at sea, was still a going concern was because it knew where it was going.

The fact came even more forcibly to me as I sat in the little Chapel of Sacré Coeur as a witness to the baptism of Alice Pihl Scully. It's a long ritual, the baptism of an adult, for every step in it has a meaning and neither the meaning nor the form ever varies.

The ceremony was in charge of Abbé Van den Daele, a Belgian Father, and as holy a man as ever said his beads. He is about six feet tall, extremely slender, rosy cheeked and possessed of white, soft hair, thin now, as proof of his years, which must be near to seventy.

He has known us for years; in fact, he had married us, the first couple he ever married in English. That ceremony took place in the little Church of St. Hélène on the west end of Nice toward Cannes, nearly three years ago. It is smaller than Sacré Coeur, but a parish church.

Since then a little Skippy Scully has come into the world, but his baptism took place in Paris. I think these three are the only baptisms I have ever witnessed, and all of them seemed like the most natural thing in the world. In the case of the adults certainly there was no forcing, no hurrying, no pressure, nothing but the slow, easy sure growth of feeling into belief and the belief into action.

We only had one difficulty, both for Skippy in Paris and for Alice in Nice; we couldn't seem to find witnesses. That seems incredible, but it's a fact. To get two good Catholics as witnesses among our friends proved in both cases so difficult we had to go to remoter fields for aid.

That a spiritual growth could be going on in such a bohemian atmosphere, an atmosphere of people who were sure of nothing but their belief in unbelief, is astonishing. It was going on at a time when examples of Catholics who had fallen away were coming more and more into our lives. They were people all of you know by name, and their tangled lives were sad to us, however gay they might have seemed to others. At least four of them had complicated their lives, and knew it, by marrying, or planning to marry, in violation of the laws of the Church, and all of them were deferring as long as possible the realization that their inner lives and their outer actions could never permit them a moment's peace.

It had never occurred to any of them that it would have been a little bit less difficult if they had adhered more rigidly to the simple commands of the Church. If they had gone to Mass every Sunday, that might have solved everything. As it was, they didn't know where to go and we couldn't help them, though they were all well worth the helping.

Part of this was due to the fact that I have a fixed dislike for being my brother's keeper. I know in my wife's case at least I leaned particularly backward. I tried not to give her any encouragement beyond what one's every-day acts might do in that direction, and I know many times she must have felt discouraged that I seemed to take so little interest in the spiritual problem she had to solve. But to me this is the most personal matter in the world, and no one can save our souls for us but ourselves. Anything we do of enduring value must come from within.

I knew also that Catholic converts all too often become quite humorless and hardly add to the world's happiness when in that state. I once knew a man like that when I was in a sanatorium in Arizona. He had wandered around and tried everything. Finally he lost a huge fortune and thought that with it he would lose his mind. Catholicism saved him that, at any rate, and afterward he couldn't say often enough that he never

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wanted the money back, except for the good he might do with it and, since he might fail even in that, he guessed he didn't want it back at all. But he was lonely even so, for his wife and daughter couldn't follow him in this last step, though they had joined him in the move from Methodism to Christian Science and in one or two other spiritual sidesteps which he had made on the road to Rome.

I had read also enough of the writings of converted authors whose conversion seemed to give them no lasting peace, since they couldn't stop writing about it, and resolved never to become equally garrulous myself. By that I mean that while I knew Catholicism was the solution of most people's woes, I always refrained from telling anybody in particular that this was his answer, unless he asked me; and few ever did that.

And so as I looked on at my wife's baptism, I had a feeling that this was the will of God and none of my making. Certainly of all the people there I was the mildest believer. The Abbé was and is sanctity itself and the two witnesses, Prince and Princess de Béarn et de Chalais, go to Holy Communion every day. They lead an active as well as a religious life, a sanely balanced way to live.

My wife is so sensitively made that quite innocent things make her quiver like a G string, and this experience was moving her to the point where she might easily have fainted. Fortunately before this point was reached her witnesses were called up to stand at either side of her and she held a hand of each.

There they stood: little Alice bareheaded in a brown corduroy dress of her own making, and a grey fur coat, her little Highlander hat in fur and corduroy having been removed half way through the ceremony; at her left, the Prince, a well-built man of fifty; and at her right, the Princess, a beautiful woman a few years younger. When the long ceremony was over, Alice went to make a general confession and her witnesses repaired to the big chapel to say some prayers for all of us, while I knelt there too and said my rosary.

The chapel itself is the friendliest in all Nice. It has wooden floors for one thing and that's almost unheard of in France. We wanted to be married there, but it's not a church, simply a chapel. On Sundays at the eleven o'clock Mass there is always an English sermon, usually given by an Irish priest; but whatever the Mass the chapel is invariably packed.

On this baptismal occasion, however, there were only four or five people present. The whole ceremony took a good deal more than an hour, and when it was over we went out into a blustery March day, and repaired to a Russian restaurant for a gorgeous luncheon. We invited the others, but they wouldn't think of breaking in on our happiness. It was like honeymooning all over again.

Our luncheon started with a lobster salad and went into fried chicken and ended on apple strudel with cream. It seemed just perfect. In this world at least, surely the more innocent needs of the flesh are not incompatible with a soul that has been fed on the riches of the Church.

Afterwards, happy and strangely free from the worries of a world which had lost its way, we returned home to our little villa on the hill, where little two-year-old Skippy greeted us with his broadest grin and happiest embrace.

Alice wanted to know a dozen times if I weren't happier now, and I couldn't answer "Yes," because there honestly was no change for me. She is what she was and she always was what she is. And I, in my hazy, lazy way, have always been of one mind and one belief with her. With her I have reached the only things that endure. For thirty-eight years I got on without them. I had no wife, no home, no children. I was all right. Now I have them all and I am still all right.

So what? Well, the "what" is that previously I had been a failure in every direction, and if some measure of approval has come to us in this greatest of all gambles (arranging words on paper) maybe it's a heaven-sent pay-off for facing life's responsibilities instead of dodging them forever.

We agree that it's been a crazy thing to do, to marry and to have kids with conditions as they are, if you're hell-bent to live only for conditions; but if conditions are something you don't care more than sixteen fairly long hoots about, then marrying and having kids to trot behind you to Mass in this year of grace is the only thing to do.

The rest of the world may not agree with this idea, but my answer to the rest of the world is, "We're happy"; which is more than can be said of those who laugh at our simple formula for a perfect life.

## *A Girl*

She is as summer-hearted as a rose!
Hers is a sweetness showered without stint;
Could one deserve her bounty? Or by dint
Of all endeavor earn what she bestows?
Her heart no grudging calculation knows,
Her loveliness is lavished with no hint
Of barter, for her giving bears the print
Of her own graciousness that ever grows.

O Life, be gentle! Let the swift years fall
Softly upon her! Let no harshness chill
The joy that blossoms now where'er she goes!
Return to her what she gives unto all—
Bright gladness, sunny love—and keep her still
As she is now, a summer-hearted rose!

S. C. N.

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# CHILDREN'S MASS: BERLIN

By MICHAEL WILLIAMS

IT WAS the third Sunday after Easter, and a little before nine o'clock in the morning, when I got to Berlin from Paris and found a room in a hotel near the station. So, I sallied forth for Mass. Fortunately for me—destitute of knowledge of any but my own language—I was accompanied by a friend to whom German was almost a twin language, for he had been educated in Austria and he knows his way about Europe as only fifteen years or more of constant traveling, much of the time in the service of our Department of State, can teach such knowledge, or rather, teach such expertness in the use of travel-knowledge. Therefore, we promptly learned that there was a Catholic church only five minutes away as the taxi plies, just off Unter den Linden; a church dedicated to Saint Hedwig (whoever she may have been) opposite the State University, near the Opera House, and one of a score of stately and somewhat grandiose buildings that surround Franz Josef Platz. (It was here, a few nights later, that we witnessed the Burning of the Books: but that, as Mr. Kipling taught us to say, is quite another story.)

The church is the cathedral of Berlin. It looks like a smaller dome of St. Peter's in Rome, but plumped down upon the ground. It was built by the order of Frederick the Great. The story goes that one day he was drinking tea with the architect, who wished to know if His Royal Majesty had any ideas as to the architectural style of the new church, and who found that His Royal Majesty had, indeed, an idea of pure originality. For he turned his tea-cup upside down, saying: "Build me a church like this." So it was done.

Well, a tea-cup reversed is a dome; merely increase its scale and you may erect something that half fills the sky. What the architect built seems to me to possess a noble quality; and what has been done in the interior by quite modern architects, while it is certainly bizarre in its singularity of the combinations of eighteenth- and twentieth-century ideas, is beautiful. If this verdict should be rejected by the experts of the Liturgical Arts Society, on the basis of my rank amateurism, at least I can say with assurance that it is an unusually devotional church.

Certainly it emanated the atmosphere of prayer on that Sunday morning; for when Mass goes on amid the singing of several hundred children's voices—and what they sang, while not perhaps quite liturgical, was good, sound sacred song—why, then, even the dullards among the elder folk may gain some inkling of what Our Lord meant us to know when He said: "Suffer the little ones to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I felt very foreign, and almost forlorn, when first I approached St. Hedwig's. Although I have traveled a good deal in my time, never had I been in Germany, and my ignorance of the language, and perhaps something of the fatigue of much recent travel and work in France and Italy, amid lands and people and tongues so different to what now surrounded me, had left me feeling constrained and awkward. Then, as I entered the church, I was startled by seeing someone who for the moment I thought was a young American friend who lives in Stamford, Connecticut. I was on the point of crying out: "Why, Bobbie—what are you doing here in Berlin?" But of course it wasn't Bobbie; it was only a boy who was "the livin' spit and image of him," as they say in Ireland; a little boy in whose veins runs the same German blood that also runs in Bobbie's veins, far off in the United States, where his father and his grandfathers before the father, have transmitted to Bobbie the spirit of America. But the little boy in Berlin who resembled my American friend, also resembled little boys I have seen, in this Holy Year journey of mine, in Rome, and in Paris. Not indeed in looks—but in the great resemblance that binds together all little boys at Mass.

It is true—Ah, dear Lord! it is only too sadly true—that I have seen little boys, mere children, brought together in another union that was not of the Mass; little boys marching and being drilled as soldiers. This I have not seen in France. At least, in France, they wait till the boys are at the gates of manhood before they begin to prepare them to be cannon fodder. They do not grab them from the cradles; not as yet; but perhaps this may yet happen in France, and even in England; yes, and even in the United States. For the spirit that has many names (whose name is Legion?)—such names as, "My country, right or wrong"; or, "My country above all other countries"; or, "My race supreme above all other races"—is spreading its frightful influence outside those lands which it has seized upon, and wherein at present it rules, not completely triumphant, but certainly in possession of predominant power: such lands as Russia, and, partially anyhow, Italy, and now, to the amazement of most of the rest of the world, Germany.

This spirit is served by a host of lesser but yet strong and active spirits. Men call them by queer names not suggesting their diabolical quality; out of which names professors of economics, and of

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political science, to say nothing about statesmen and politicians, and journalists, and business men, make books, and lectures, and speeches, and party platforms, and campaign posters, and radio broadcasts, and editorial articles, and flaming headlines, and advertisements, and slogans: "Buy British!" "Buy American!" "Buy French!" "Buy Chinese!" "Buy Czechoslovakian!" And also they produce edicts, and laws, and orders in council, and decrees concerning tariffs, and counter-tariffs; and taxes and super-taxes, and immigration exclusion measures, and retaliatory measures—all of which, bedeviling the world, lead men and women round again to the service of the spirit which seizes the little children out of the laps, almost out of the wombs, of their mothers, and puts swords and bombs and gas-masks in their baby hands, and strives to put into their soft little hearts something called the ideal of the sovereign race, or of the totalitarian state, or "My country, right or wrong, my country."

This spirit, when it passes from theory into practice, usually means not that love of the homeland, of the fatherland, of the native soil, and the dear familiar things of home, which is good and true and human, and blessed by the Church, but rather means hatred, and contempt, and enmity for those not of one's supreme race, or one's own particular nation. So is the democratic dogma, degraded by selfish and avaricious and irreligious men, breaking down in Europe and clearing the way for a return to slavery.

Only the Mass can unite where this other spirit divides and sunders.

Let us, therefore, return to the children's Mass, in Berlin, on the third Sunday after Easter, in the Holy Year of Jubilee, 1933—the nineteen-hundredth anniversary of the passion, and the death, and the resurrection of Christ Who said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

At the appointed time, the priest who was offering up the Sacrifice of the Lamb that was slain for the salvation of the world, for the little children, and for their parents, and their teachers, the nuns and brothers, and, indeed, for all the children of this world, inside or outside the Church which He Who came in the flesh nineteen hundred years ago built upon Peter and which will remain resting upon Peter, the Rock, until the end of Time—at the proper moment, I say, the priest laid aside his chasuble and entered the pulpit and read the announcements and the Epistle and Gospel of the day; and then briefly preached to his flock.

Then did I lament not only, I trust, my sins (which so trouble the soul in a holy place, especially when little children are present), but also my ignorance. For I knew that the strong yet tender voice, echoing confusedly (for me) from the dome above us, was engrossing the congregation (except, of course, the really little boys and girls, who squirmed and wriggled as they do all over the world, in church, or school) and was saying things good to hear and worthy of remembrance. There was a great purpose being followed; there was utter conviction; there was the sense of an hour of crisis, and of the expression of some plan of action to meet that imminent crisis.

My friend, who not only had found this church for me, so that I might do my Sunday duty, but had come with me to look after this stranger in a strange land (but not so any longer, while at Mass), yet who himself is not a Catholic, was one of those held in deep attention by the sermon. Never before, he told me afterward, had he heard such simple, compelling eloquence. Being a lover (and one with good judgment) of prose, and verse, and all the arts of language, perhaps it was the verbal beauty of that sermon to children and their parents which moved him so; yet not entirely; for he knows what is going on in Germany, and in Europe generally; and he grasped the significance of that sermon, and appreciated the principle which it expressed.

For all over Germany, that day, sermons such as the one in St. Hedwig's, expressed in many modes, no doubt, or accompanied by the reading of a bishop's pastoral letter, were uttered. For it was "Catholic School Sunday," an annual event, a day set apart by the chief shepherds of the flock of Christ in Germany so that their priests might in a special manner impress upon Catholic parents the supreme duty of giving their children a Catholic education. Year after year after year—almost, one might say, *in saecula saeculorum*—is that sermon, or that pastoral letter, preached or read, and not in Germany alone, but throughout the world. But there never has been such a year of crisis like this year, for Germany and for the Catholics of Germany—yes, and for the Jews in Germany, those Jews of whose race and blood the Christ of Christians and Jews alike took flesh and tabernacled amongst men: but that, too, is another story, with which I shall try to deal, as best I may, at another time.

In Rome, where I had been before coming to Berlin, and in Berlin, as later I came to learn, one great question dominates all the many questions which the amazing coming, the startling completeness, the almost absolute power of the new régime —which may come to be recognized as the most profound revolution known to history since Christianity itself—moves all Catholics to ponder, and the question is this: "Will Catholic education be permitted?"

Some answer it one way, the worst way; others answer it in accordance with their hope, if not yet

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of their knowledge, that Catholic education will not be vitally injured, though undoubtedly it will be circumscribed. But the answer of the Church can only be as it must always be, in loyalty, in duty, in obedience, to Her Founder, Who commanded: "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me, and forbid them not." And this year, the message of the bishops of Germany to their flock, both pastors and people, simply and without emphasis, save the inevitable emphasis given to their words by the situation itself, supplied that answer.

In the sermon at St. Hedwig's, Peter spoke: the voice of the Bishop of Rome, Peter's successor, the Vicar of Christ, could be heard directing and supporting the voices of the German bishops, and the priest who spoke at the children's Mass. The waves of the new revolution are beating and foaming about the Rock of Christ.

Will they settle down, ceasing to rage, and become the fertilizing water of a new German life of security and peace?

There is a certain chance that this may be so; there is a hope; but—well, there are many buts, and ifs, and maybes—a black shadow hangs over all these things. I cannot discuss these matters now; nor do I wish to do so; rather will I close by recalling again that which will be among the dearest of my memories of the high romance of this strange world through which I wander: the little children singing at their Mass in Berlin, while in other churches, throughout the world, little French, and Polish, and English, and Irish, and Chinese—finish the list of the races and nations of mankind for yourself—were also singing hymns, or hearing their pastors tell them the story of the Lord Who loves them so, or uniting themselves with Him at the communion railing.

And this memory matters more than all the buts, and the ifs, and all the problems of the world—for it is the Mass that matters more than all other things.

The Mass unites mankind; most other things divide and sunder. The Pope has given all the world its opportunity in this Holy Year of Redemption to gather about the Rock, which is the altar-stone of the everlasting Mass. It is not that he expects everybody suddenly to turn Catholic. The Holy Father knows this world, and the strange, dark hearts and minds of men; but he also knows with absolute assurance that only in religion is there a permanent foundation for world peace, and security, and justice, and a decent livelihood for all, and that the Catholic Church, to say the least, is the strongest and most stable, and most human, and adaptable (without changing) of all religions, and that if statesmen and economists and business men and workingmen will only heed the truth, namely, that without religious principles no treaties, or laws, or conferences are of any lasting use—why, then, there will at last be hope for us all.

If men will not heed that lesson—but, never mind that: I prefer to close this page with the consoling recollection of the little German boys and girls at Mass, singing in unison.

# THE JOYS OF SOLITUDE

By HARRIET TERESA HASSELL

BUT PERHAPS I should say, "of the solitary life." The word solitude has been deprived of meaning by minor poets who practise something like self-hypnosis on the streets of New York, and then talk about it to the newspapers. Thus, it is customary to speak rather sonorously of the "solitudes of Central Park" and the "loneliness of Broadway."

In reality, this is mere elegant piffle. Solitude, properly realized, means years spent in "isolation, remote from society." It means day after day of silent contemplation; and, finally, it involves the possession of that original, almost eccentric, spirituality from which mystic joys grow.

The uninitiated may be surprised to hear that God comes to visit hermits even before they definitely believe. But every citizen of solitude, sceptical or devout, soon learns that God is always ready for a little harmless gossip. The Holy Ghost is an exception, of course. He invariably sits in the front parlor, behaving like a most austere cardinal, and reminding you of

> that abyss
> Of radiance, clear and lofty . . .

and so on, down to

> and the third
> Seem'd fire, breathed equally from both.

The modern mind—even solitary mystics are victims of the shirt-sleeves tendency of the age—gapes a little at Dante's glowing simile. Very certainly the Third is fire; but not, somehow, "breathed equally from both." It is true that Jehovah has revealed Himself as a pillar of fire, but it seems likely that these metamorphoses are merely to add piquancy to the more lovable guise in which He usually appears. For, as I have said, Jehovah is willing to gossip a little; and none but a Jewish patriarch, complete with fine copper-colored

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skin, flowing white beard, and black velvet skull cap, could reminisce so delightfully of shepherds herding flock on Asiatic plains and of mighty rides on the whirlwind.

Such talk as this will go on by the hour, uninterrupted by the necessity that compels you to work and sleep. Indeed, He always begins His best stories just at twilight. At sundown in late summer while the new moon shivers in the sulphur yellow sky, He will sometimes explain the treasures of the hail, and show them all glistening in His hand. Even the noisy cricket must hush to listen, and the strong pines bow so humbly that they split apart with hardly a sound.

But it would be a mistake to say absolutely, as pagans and pantheists do, that these demonstrations of pine and cricket argue the presence of God in them. Even as a visitor, God is too precise to admit of such fallacies, but informs you quite clearly that nature, far from being in Him or He in it, is His possession. Thus, nature is understandably glorified, and no longer needs such poor apologists as ignorant sentimentalists and romantic scientists. Jehovah can show you, better than M. Fabre ever did with all his microscopes, the wondrous intricacy of an ant: with Him it is never *the* ant, an insect lost in the masses of a type but *an* ant, separate, individual, and master of destiny barring acts of Providence. This, the separation of types into individuals, is Jehovah's happiest assurance. It transforms even the most amoral Communism, washes it in the water of baptism, and gives it a new spirit and a right heart.

Here it is that Christ comes in. He may not be quite so distinguished as His patriarchal Father nor on so many receiving lists, but it is those whom He visits who are especially favored in the graces of His Father. On this account, Christ's visits are to be taken as an extra luxury, something far above the usual luxuries of solitude. Yet He is particularly humble except, of course, on those proud occasions when His Mother accompanies Him. Then He bears an oriflamme as elegantly chaste as the banner of Saint Denis. And no wonder. Who wouldn't carry banners, for that royally pure Virgin? I said royally with intention; for if such purity and dignity as hers are not in royal opposition to that type of promiscuous democracy which verges in precarious fashion on Socialism, why then I should like to know what royalty is. After all, argue as you will, the Queen of Heaven must be a lady, and ladies, who may be anything from scrub women to princesses, are always regal. None can take advantage of them, or debase their high gentlehood; a fact—sudden thought!—which makes it unnecessary for ladies to be divorced.

This sort of realization, refuting the sentimental humanitarian in us all and confirming the dictates of Mother Church, is the poetry of solitude. Silence and a half-unconscious groping down the hushed corridors of the mind will wring from any combination of circumstances that sort of truth which is interchangeable with great moral poetry. This silence and this groping, so vitalized by much custom that the mind can see itself moving like a man going warily with outstretched hands, closed eyes, and shuffling feet along a dark, almost familiar hall—this is the forerunner of that thing, inspiration or God, that sometimes speaks out loud and clear in the wordless soul. It is John the Baptist living on celestial locust and honey, girt round with leopard skins, and so healthy as to seem monstrous to anemic spirits used to penthouses and politic virtues. It is, finally, contemplation, a pursuit integral to all solitary living.

You do not sit down, chin on hand, and fix your eyes on a candle except you pentrate the tallow substance. Inevitably, the mental eye emerges with a vision of hemp-fields and of the men and women who planted seeds from which grew the material of the narrow wick. Personally, I have never contemplated a candle, and for all I know their wicks may be made of flax or of cotton; but I am certain that so huge a circumstance could not evade the seeking eye. This, which is part of a neglected activity called "going back to fundamentals," is always productive of that variety of truth opposed to the hard rigidity of puritan pragmatism. With this last, citizens of solitude have nothing to do. They are subjects of reality; which invariably confers the special joy of wonder.

Now, wonder is a homely abstraction with strange, gorgeous effects. More than likely, it will set the heart to pumping blood as fiercely as sailors pump water into the hold of a burning ship; the chest expands in gloriously deep breathing, the hair prickles on the suddenly alive scalp, and all the world is a magical circus tent with heaven opening just beyond. Anything may happen. Anything may prove true. And transforming wonder has made truth as soft and sweet as wistful phantasy. Poor caution and senile prudence desert the ship, leaping from under the taffrails out into the inky, cold waters of oblivion—and there you are, dancing and making poetry in perfect ecstasy with sarabands wreathing above your head and all the mysteries of angelic Arabian Nights explained in your heart.

If this seem indecorous, why I am sure Mary went singing with wonder at the miracle of the Annunciation. Dignity is no trifling trinket with a weak clasp, easily found and easily lost. On the contrary, it is a permanent tenant of happily amazed souls, and eschews, always, the brashly practical who must put on poor ormolu imitations studded with cheap conventionalities and tawdry heraldries to impress society.

The solitary have no need to confound aristocratic babbits; even to think about so bootless a

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proceeding never occurs to them. They have the special dispensation of wonder, and are too busy exclaiming to try out fetching poses. Morning and evening all over the land, they are sitting on back doorsteps, and staring off into space while their astonished minds praise God for the miracle of twenty-four ribs. And indeed, hooped bones and overlapping tendons, set precisely and with beautiful economy, are something to think on. Let physiologists be matter-of-fact as unbelievers; the solitary heart leaps up, beholding the might of God in this natural corset but for which the pliant skin would droop against the struggling lungs.

Nor is the body too base for serious contemplation. What is more splendid than the arrangement of flesh and bone, and what other machine is possessed of intelligence? Lactantius devoted several chapters to the members of man and their use, and not even Milton's profane assertion about the rubbish found in the writings of the Fathers can rob Lactantius of his due. Certainly, it is no rubbish when he says, "God having determined to make man alone of heavenly nature, . . . He set him up for the contemplation of heaven, and made him a biped in order that he might look in that direction whence is his origin. . . ." So, you see, to marvel at the intricate utilities of flesh is to begin like Bishop Berkeley with tar-water and ascend "by just gradations" to the throne of God.

All profound reasoning must end in precisely the same place. You cannot escape it, not even if you start with the League of Nations or with Philip in Macedonia. But such matters as these are too simple except for the amateur in solitude who has not already formed his opinions upon them; the connoisseur chooses a more complex subject, one full of airy subleties and wingy mysteries. Like the mediaeval schoolmen, he meditates upon the number of spirits who can stand tip-toe on a pin's point; or perhaps he puts seven-league boots on his mind, and sends it striding down the centuries to watch God's first experiments with a rose. If you will, you can see a pretty cinema here with Eve training rambler roses about the walls of Eden, and discussing with Adam the value of dew as a spray against worms. And then the screen rolls outward, past Rachel and Ruth, each with her rose garden, and on to her who was so perfect a gardener that no worms ever dare burrow through the petals of her roses. With what ease you have found your way from original sin to the Mother of God and the Second Person of the Holy Trinity! Take but one more step, and you will be inside heaven itself.

But this, somebody says, is theology decked out in the trappings of poetry. Well, the Sacrifice of the Mass is a daily singing of theological framework; and that first cataclysmic Mass was, if you please, merely Jehovah's wondrous poem picturing to the world the enormity of its sin and the infinity of His forgiveness. The fact is, all truth is replete with metaphor and simile, full of noble allusions and homely comfort. If it were not so, the solitary life would be a continuous diet of unsavory prose, for in solitude the soul cannot escape reality. That is always there, affecting the spirit with happy terror and mystery and wonder, the very essences of poetry.

Experienced children of solitude know how difficult it is to separate absolutely the many joys inherent to life in the realm, to distinguish certainly which is the spring and which is the brooklet. But the real springs are few, and when you have found the first and the second, the finding of the third is inevitable. You are bound to go on lapping among those fantastically pure waters until you find one more potent and more portentous to yourself than any other. Being alive to sensations, you will feel your backbone growing wonderfully strong, and your mental fingers touching one another in loving confidence. "This," you will say, almost shouting with divine drunkenness, "this is God's creature who is a little below the angels; this is my being. Free. Separate. Individual."

Here you may shy a little, suddenly, like a colt led to strange troughs among suspicious company. Late events have given a bad odor to individualism, the rugged-seeming old fraud who goes by the name is too reminiscent of politicians gaudy and dishonest. But in spite of impersonations and in spite of intellectual leeches making merry over the true scions, there is still good blood left in those members of the individual family who are wise and bold enough to understand that life is, after all, a private conversation between each man and the angels.

And how could you talk with angels except you knew yourself as an entity? Imagine a dialogue with Gabriel in which you confessed that you had no knowledge of your own mind! You could say, "I'm totally ignorant of myself, Sir. I'm merely a bee in the American hive, something like a servant of the Soviet Republic." Or you might try some such bluff as this: "Your Honor, I'm John Jones of the Portland Jones, and I'm twenty-one years old, and I think you must be a grand person." In either case, you'd quickly find yourself alone and with no prospect of future visitors.

No; in order to enjoy pleasant relations with seraphs and spirits you must kneel humbly before the still mirror of your moral being. Needless to say, the object is not a Narcissan one, but that of losing yourself in the depths below the mirrored image where Christ lies with all His agonies and triumphs. Not until you have done this, will the inner portals of mystery and miracle be unlocked for you. Of course, there are the very innermost portals to which you cannot attain while you live; but having angels for friends, you will

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hear talk of the surfaces and outlines of those most sacred gates. And Jehovah, Who by this time has begun to speak more intimately with you, will probably promise you a glimpse into the holy ark of heaven if He thinks you merit that grace.

But I had better stop here before I usurp the priestly duties, and begin to talk about salvation of which I know nothing as yet. Nothing, that is, except that the third spring is God's laundry where the imperishable silks of the soul are whitened by humility and made stiff with the starch of devout courage. So equipped, you can sing like David, hear prophecies in every wind, and rejoice at sight of the Visible Hand on every cloud. Free in the vast, sweet liberty of God, you can consort with saints and apocalyptic spirits who brood happily over many things which a paradoxically strait-laced and supposedly intellectual society condemns. Your unfrightened fingers will touch the keys of Peter; your feet rest on that Rock; and your mouth be full of the wine of salvation, the last and greatest joy of solitude.

## THOSE LITERARY FELLERS

By DON C. SEITZ

WHEN Rutherford B. Hayes became President of the United States after the election of 1876, by a vote of eight to seven in the Electoral Commission, and began to honor men of letters with high diplomatic posts, instead of selecting good poker players, Senator Simon Cameron, of Pennsylvania, uttered a mighty snort of contempt anent "Them d——d literary fellers." These included such examples as James Russell Lowell and Bayard Taylor. Hayes was harking back to the age when Washington Irving, George Bancroft, Nathaniel Hawthorne and John Lothrop Motley had met with merited recognition at the hands of the Executive. The country applauded, but the politicians howled.

Somehow my juvenile tastes and chance threw me early into literary company. Coming to Maine as the son of a wandering clergyman from Ohio, fate landed me in Norway, Oxford County, Maine, famed as the home of Sylvanus Cobb, jr., whose fiction made Robert Bonner rich as owner and publisher of the New York *Ledger*. His father had been a divine of the same faith as my father, and one of his predecessors as pastor of the First Church. Then there was Charles Asbury Stephens, the maker of robust books for boys, whose "Camping Out" series was even then enriching Lee and Shepard. In the adjacent town of Waterford, Ralph Waldo Emerson had a sister and was remembered as a frequent passenger in the stage that made its start from the nearby Grand Trunk Railroad. More than this, it was the birthplace of Charles Farrar Browne, better known as Artemus Ward, the humorist. His mother and numbers of cousins were still living and I became well enough versed in his career to become his biographer.

Not so far away, down on the coast at Harpswell Neck, Elijah Kellogg was turning out a grist of boys' stories, hinged around "Lion Ben, of Elm Island," that were wholesome and immensely popular. Nathaniel Hawthorne had lived when a youngster on the not distant shores of Sebago Lake, where, as he said, he "acquired his accursed habits of solitude." Then in Portland, our chief city, two hours away, was the fine old mansion built by General Peleg Wadsworth, in which Henry Wadsworth Longfellow spent his youth. Surely there was "atmosphere" enough all about.

When circumstances sent me to New York to begin life as a newspaper reporter I came early into the society of literary folks. As a member of the Brooklyn *Daily Eagle's* staff I wrote an account of the marriage of Anna Katherine Green, then a celebrity as author of the best-selling "Leavenworth Case." Then as the paper's Albany correspondent I made the close acquaintance of Philander Deming, a venerable court stenographer whose "Tompkins and Other Folks," and "Adirondack Stories" deserve to rank as classics. Next, joining the *World* forces, I fell in with Henry Loomis Nelson and George Cary Eggleston, brother of Edward, creator of "The Hoosier Schoolmaster," and later met that delightful gentleman. His novel had told of things I knew as a small boy in Indiana and Ohio. The "schoolmaster," Ralph Hartsook, had a duplicate in another instructor of like name—Dan Hartsook, who had taught my mother and was the only person she ever hated. George Cary Eggleston claimed to have been the original of his brother's tale. Somehow, I could never believe this. Though an Indianan by birth, he had been caught young and taken to Virginia, to graduate into the world of journalism via the Confederate army. He lacked the least tang of a Hoosier.

There followed acquaintance with Richard Watson Gilder, Bronson Howard and Charles Barnard, who picked up a competence by writing "The County Fair," a play in which Neil Burgess performed, that was made a success through using a treadmill device on the stage by which it was possible to show a real horse-race in vivid action. Otherwise it was a moral show and so enabled the pious to have warrant for seeing the sinful struggle between the equines. Barnard had been one of the editors of *St. Nicholas* when it was an admirable publication for the young. He lived in Darien, Connecticut—"On a peak in Darien," as he put it.

Mr. Gilder was deep-eyed and seemed always to be sad. As a youngster he had toiled with a battery in the Gettysburg campaign, when the caissons had to be pulled by men through the mud, with leverage on their wheel-spokes. He initiated the founding of the Authors Club of New York, in his charming little house on 15th Street, where it still stands to protect the light and air of the Union Square Savings Bank. The *Century Magazine,* of which he was then the able editor, had its office nearby on the 18th Street side of the Square. He was the gentleman personified; kindly, though distant in manner. Bronson Howard was bluff. "The Henrietta" and "Shenandoah" made him rich.

I began to frequent the Authors Club in the nineties. Mark Twain came in occasionally. Andrew Carnegie was admitted on the strength of his "Coaching Tour" in

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Europe and rewarded the club by setting up a fine fund for the relief of distressed men of letters, which it administers. The club included numbers of diplomats as the years went on: Arthur Sherburne Hardy, whose "Barriers Burned Away" gave him fame, and who served in Persia; Henry Van Dyke, Minister to the Hague; Maurice Francis Egan, Minister to Denmark; David Jayne Hill, Ambassador to Germany; James W. Gerard, his successor in that office; Robert Underwood Johnson, one of the *Century* editors, Ambassador to Italy; Thomas Nelson Page, who filled the same post; Frederick Courtland Penfield, Ambassador to Austria; and Oscar S. Straus, Ambassador to Turkey—quite a comely company.

Mr. Straus was president of the Authors Club for a time. He had been on all sides politically, and when he returned after one of his sudden switches to his old home town of Talbottom, Georgia, a sniffing Southerner asked suspiciously: "Oscar, haint you shifted a good deal to the other side of the fence?"

"Not at all," rejoined the unabashed diplomat. "They moved the fence."

Mr. Straus was a brother of Isidor Straus, who went down so bravely with his wife on the Titanic, and of Nathan Straus, eminent as a philanthropist. I once commended Oscar to Isidor as a person of consequence. He did not seem to share the opinion.

"Well," I argued, "he's certainly intellectual."

"Intellectual, yes," he replied, "but no business, no business."

It was one of Mr. Straus's pet theories that there was no such thing as a racial Jew. He was certainly a wandering specimen in his long public career, careening so to speak between the politics of Grover Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt.

Aside from diplomats, men to be remembered were Edmund Clarence Stedman, Richard Henry Stoddard and Moncure D. Conway. Stedman, called the "poet banker," was a man of singular delicacy, both in manner and appearance. His face had the look of having been fashioned out of the inner shell of a Nautilus. Fair and fragile, he was most engaging, and above all, kind to young authors. It did not seem possible that this small, elegant man could have run away to sea in his youth, lost his number at Yale for eloping with a milliner's apprentice, and been a valorous war correspondent for the *World,* besides writing a flaming ballad in exaltation of John Brown, after the luckless raid on Harper's Ferry.

Stoddard was the noblest Roman of them all. He reached further back into our literary history than any of the others—to Irving and Fitz-Greene Halleck and the Boston gods. With all his charm as a poet, he was vastly profane in speech. He left a choice library to the Club and several priceless letters from Edgar Allen Poe; also some remarkable confessions written by Edwin Booth.

Conway had gone to England, as a Unitarian clergyman, just as the Civil War broke out and remained absent thirty years. On his return he decided to reside in Clark Street, Brooklyn, where, in the guise of an *Eagle* reporter, I was the first to greet him, standing bewildered amid a multitude of packing-cases. The result was a lasting friendship. He was a Virginian who opposed slavery, a clergyman with the courage to write an impartial life of Thomas Paine, the "infidel" and patriot, and a "History of Devil Worship." He seemed rather to approve of the Evil One.

Of a merrier sort were Charles Battell Loomis, who bore himself as a humorist, dying young, and George W. Cable, who found New Orleans inhospitable after he had written "The Grandissimes." He spent the last half of his life in the cooler climate of Northampton, Massachusetts. On gala nights at the Club he would sing charming songs in a voice of light tenor, that suggested the cooing of a dove. He and Mark Twain did a reading and lecturing stunt together that filled the pockets of both.

Another favorite with us was Francis Hopkinson Smith, whose grandfather did the only noisy thing that ever happened in Philadelphia, when he wrote "Hail Columbia." "Hop" as everybody called him, was the youngest old man I ever knew. Touching eight decades, he never looked more than half his years. On Watch Night (New Year's Eve) he always told the same story. It was about the Virginia major who, reduced in circumstances by the war, took to keeping a livery stable. One chill winter night he was kept out late transporting the colored élite of his town to a ball. To warm up, he ventured into the hall and snuggled up behind the stove. Just as he was getting comfortable the master of ceremonies approached him with much majesty and remarked: "'Scuse me, majah, if I ask yo to retiah from dis occashun. De ladies objects to de smell of hoss on yo clothes."

Most delightful of raconteurs was Brander Matthews in his active days. I recall his saying once that the only things he really liked were either "expensive, immoral or indigestible."

Frank R. Stockton was the wittiest and most entertaining of the club members. Solemn of visage and decayed in physique he gave no sign of the mirth that was in him. I recall his starting a night of improvised limerick-making with this:

> "There was once a young lady of Niger
> Went to ride on the back of a tiger—
> They came back from the ride
> With the lady inside
> And a smile on the face of the tiger."

M. Jusserand, when Ambassador from France, became a member. He was a joy and made the most delightful little speeches. One evening he told with deep emotion how, when he won the prize for oratory at the Sorbonne, he fainted in his mother's arms after the ordeal. The narration moved the chairman to remark: "Once again we have proof that they order things better in France. Here it is the audience that usually has to be revived."

Dorothy Canfield, blushing under honors conferred, disclaimed the distinction as more than she deserved. "I'm like the little girl in the kindergarten play," she said, "who was assigned to the part of a lion, and on being reproved for not roaring, replied: 'I'm not a lion, I'm an ant.'"

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# THE SCREEN AND STAGE

By RICHARD DANA SKINNER

## *The Devil's Brother (Fra Diavolo)*

WHEN Hollywood all too rarely decides to produce an operetta, the results are apt to be gratifying. "The Vagabond King," the "Song of the Flame" and a few others have given an intimation that music and song can be gracefully combined on the screen in the telling of a romantic story. The latest successful effort along these lines is the adaptation of Auber's famous light opera, "Fra Diavolo," with Dennis King as the romantic songster of the leading rôle, and with those two delectable slap-stick comedians, Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, as the awkward goofs whom Diavolo quite illogically takes as his servants in an audacious robbery.

"Fra Diavolo," it may be recalled, was a romantic brigand of the eighteenth century who (for the purposes of operetta, at least) sang his way on horseback through the hills, robbed the rich without scruple, and used ladies' hearts as an avenue to their jewels. A part of this sort is cut to order for Dennis King, vocally and histrionically. He takes full advantage of his opportunities in the present film. But the two comedians walk away with the show, none the less. First they are robbed of their life's savings. Then they decide to turn brigands themselves, but rather unfortunately try to hold up Fra Diavolo himself. In the end, Diavolo relents and takes them on as his personal servants. From then on their antics are uproarious and of course incredible. They spoil the best of Diavolo's plans, betray him for a reward, and unwittingly help in his escape from the firing squad. It is all very silly, but there has been no better slap-stick since Chaplin days.

A curious and interesting by-product of such operatic adaptations is the ever-widening acquaintance it gives our vast public with the delights of much music formerly confined to opera houses. It is only a few decades since the American population at large lived in fear and trembling of being obliged to listen to "classical" music. It was literally engulfed in a fear complex of towering proportions—all due to enforced unfamiliarity. What the Victrola, first of all, and then the radio and talking screen have done to break down this fear is almost miraculous. The orchestras of the large motion picture houses should also be given their share of credit. It is not so much that the public taste at large has been educated, but rather that through the opportunity of listening without fear and inferiority popular audiences have discovered much beauty for themselves. They have simply been allowed to develop naturally what was always their potential good taste. The next step is bound to be that finer discrimination between good and indifferent interpretations which follows the first pleasant familiarity.

## *A Study in Scarlet*

CERTAIN characters of stage and fiction will simply not yield to varied interpretation. Sherlock Holmes is such a character. Reginald Owen has written a script for the screen version of "A Study in Scarlet," and also plays the rôle of the detective of detectives. The script is passably good, and there is really nothing wrong with Mr. Owen's acting. In fact, it is excellent. But he is simply not Holmes—meaning, partly, that he is not William Gillett, and partly, that he is not the incarnation of the famous illustrations that accompanied the early Conan Doyle serials. Nor, for that matter, does he fit the verbal descriptions. Mr. Owen is far too round-faced and bursting with health to be the least bit reminiscent of the tall ascetic dope addict of Conan Doyle's imagination. As a Sherlock Holmes fan for more than a quarter of a century, I am incapable of accepting a Holmes play or film from which the Holmes of my convictions is missing.

Then, too, the script is not of the very best. "A Study in Scarlet," you may recall, is one of those episodes in which Holmes assumes a disguise for part of his sleuthing. Perhaps it is because the disguised detective has gone somewhat out of fashion, but this episode struck me as incredibly naive. Then, too, the amiable Doctor Watson, though admittedly a foil for Holmes's intelligence, is not exactly meant to be the interlocutor at a minstrel show. In this version, Watson is such an incredibly stupid ass as to be almost comic relief. The technique of detective stories has improved considerably since the original Holmes period, but there is still enough good material in the old stories to make excellent screen entertainment provided antiquated parts are slightly modified and proper attention is paid to atmospheric and character details.

## *The Box-office Verdict*

THAT showman's handbook, *Variety,* gives us the sad but customary intelligence that out of 117 plays tried on Broadway this last season, only 26 "broke even" at the box-office, and only nine could be set down as real profit-makers. As far back as I can recollect, the proportion of successes to total productions has run around the 10 percent figure. Yet each year, the hard facts raise the inevitable and surprised, "Why?"

It does seem almost incredible that after running the gauntlet of play readers, managers, actors and directors, all presumably qualified as experts in their lines, so many plays should completely run foul of the public taste. My own impression is that people of the theatre are apt to confuse dramatic situations (that is, certain scenes and incidents) with the central theme of good drama. The manager thinks a certain scene will draw well. The actor thinks certain scenes will "play" well. The director, too, builds his work toward certain climaxes. And in this spotted effort, the test of a real play is forgotten. That test, as I see it, is whether the play clearly centers around some one problem (comic or tragic) put up to the main character, and around the answer that character gives. It is our interest in that theme or question which makes the play real for us and permits us to be absorbed in the illusion of make-believe. A hundred details may make a play poor, but only a clear theme can possibly make it good. I venture the suggestion that 90 percent of our plays fail because the hundred details are too well handled and the one essential is almost consistently neglected.

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# COMMUNICATIONS

## A CATHOLIC CIRCULATING LIBRARY

St. Louis, Mo.

TO the Editor: The paucity of Catholic books in public libraries is well known to Catholic readers. Father Stephen J. Brown, in a recent article in *Thought,* "Treasuries of Catholic Thought," quotes an English writer who says of the public library, "The section headed Roman Catholicism often consists largely of bitter attacks on that Faith," and an American writer who notes of this country, "Catholic readers frequently bemoan the fact that it is practically impossible to get Catholic books in public libraries."

Imagine, then, the feelings of a Catholic when he steps inside a public library in a large city, and sees on the shelves of this library supported by municipal tax money a preponderance of Catholic titles. And if, like the correspondent of THE COMMONWEAL who wrote complaining of the difficulty of securing "Charles Carroll of Carrollton" in the public library, he prefers the more modern Catholic books, the expressions of rather incredulous enthusiasm rising in his throat will be accelerated when he discovers that the list of authors includes the latest generation of Catholic writers, Baring, Mackenzie, Noyes, Wyndham Lewis, Fathers Knox and Martindale and the rest of the "moderns" of America and Europe.

And—the imagination of most Catholics will require a pretty elastic stretch—picture this Catholic reader walking over to the magazine rack and finding the leading Catholic magazines, such as the English *G. K.'s Weekly,* the *English Review,* the *Downside Review,* the *Dublin Review,* and the American COMMONWEAL, *Sign* and *America,* all nestling placidly next to the usual public library array of the *New Yorker* and *Scribner's.*

From most Catholics' experiences, such a library doesn't sound very credible, but as a matter of fact it is not a figment of the imagination of an overworked Catholic columnist, and it actually exists in prosaic St. Louis, Missouri.

That it is possible and practical for Catholics to have their Faith represented in the books for which they are paying is shown by the example set in this city. Under the supervision of Catholic librarians, St. Louis has a public branch library, the stock of which is essentially Catholic in selection. The library, supported entirely from the funds of the Municipal Public Library, provides Catholics of St. Louis with the latest products of Catholic writers in the fields of essays, history, poetry and novels.

When the existence of this library was called to the attention of Father Brown, the noted literary critic wrote from Dublin: "It is indeed something unique so far as I am aware. Here in this Catholic country I have never been able to get a penny of public money for this purpose."

Like most religious enterprises, the history of the library is the story of the sacrifice and arduous labor of a number of individuals who saw the importance of such an undertaking. The nucleus of this Catholic Free Library was a collection of Catholic books left to Archbishop Glennon by a Professor George Wright. Before his death in 1909, Professor Wright had kept the books in a store-building where the public had admittance.

A Catholic woman, Miss Kathleen Riley, who operated some sort of a button factory in the downtown district of St. Louis volunteered to take over the collection of books, adding to them from her own meager resources. She found a place for the library in the factory, and although she possessed only a scanty education, by attending summer courses she became proficient in her duties as librarian. An index system she followed is still used by the present librarians.

While on her way to Mass one morning, she was decapitated by a railway car and the collection was again without a guardian. At the time of her death the library contained 4,762 volumes. A group of the members of the Catholic Women's Association resolved to find a place for the library. One of the members, Miss Josephine Gratiaa, the present head-librarian, suggested that the Public Library of St. Louis might accept the collection as the start of a Catholic Free Library.

She conferred with Dr. Arthur E. Boswick of the St. Louis Public Library, and found him in accord with the idea. He accepted the offer of the Catholic Women's Association to provide a place for the books in the cafeteria of the club building, although, to say the least, the arrangement was uncomfortable. A photograph in the *Public Library Bulletin* for 1915 shows the shelves of books only a few feet away from the tables of the diners.

The library grew in popularity, however, the number of books doubling in the next two years to a total of 14,591, and the location was changed to the present facilities in the heart of St. Louis in 1923.

The contents of the library measure up to the average capacity of a municipal branch library, 11,000 volumes, although unlike the stock of the other branch libraries of St. Louis, the books are predominantly Catholic. Selection of the new books is left to Miss Gratiaa, although the bills are paid from the funds of the Municipal Public Library. A glance at the shelves shows the discriminatory taste of Miss Gratiaa. Readers have frequently praised the library in supplying them with the works of writers whose books have been praised by Catholic periodicals. Miss Gratiaa has avoided the policy which actuated COMMONWEAL'S correspondent to write that the kind of a Catholic library she desired was not "a library devoted only to treatises on the state of the soul," and the books are as a rule not of the apologetic type, except for those of Sheed and Ward, whose readability is attested by Wyndham Lewis's ditty:

> "When I am in my direst need
> I seek the books of Mr. Sheed,
> But much prefer when I am bored
> The company of Mr. Ward."

"Whatever thanks should be accorded for providing a free Catholic library should go to Dr. Boswick," said Miss Gratiaa. "Without his coöperation and consent such a thing would never have been possible."

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It is interesting to note that the stock of books furnishes a well-rounded variety to suit the tastes of all types of readers. This would not have been possible a generation ago, when a Catholic book meant a book definitely religious and unsuitable to the reader who demanded the modern fare of novels and light biographies.

F. William Force.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: It was very thoughtful of Dr. Walsh (May 26) to call attention to Catholic books in the New York public libraries. However, I am afraid, that he is a little too optimistic about the buying or getting Catholic books if a demand for them should exist. For a number of years, the young men attending the leadership courses given at the Brigade Institute have been trying to loan certain Catholic books to serve as references or supplementary reading, but after having obtained a promise from the librarian that they would be procured, the petitioners were invariably informed that the books in question were not available. Quite a number of such notices accumulated during a period of about two years. There seems to be no way of getting these books on the shelves (or keep others from them) and not even the assistance of the Catholic Writers Guild which I invoked brought any results.

Rev. Kilian J. Hennrich, O. M. Cap.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I was very much interested in the letter of Dr. James J. Walsh, which was printed in the May 26 issue of The Commonweal. May I add that what he has said concerning Catholic books in the New York Public Library applies equally well to the Brooklyn Public Library. We constantly check lists of books of interest to Catholics and buy those which have more than a purely sectarian significance. Our tendency is decidedly liberal, because we are anxious to acquire books which will be used by the borrowers of the system. We cannot, of course, expend the very limited funds of the library in the purchase of volumes which stand on the shelves unused. We can assure you that we are, therefore, anxious at all times to be of assistance to those who actually use the resources of the Brooklyn Public Library.

Milton J. Ferguson,
*Chief Librarian, Brooklyn Public Library.*

## THE STRANGEST CZAR

Sewanee, Tenn.

TO the Editor: One reference by the Princess Radziwill in her review of a recent book on Ivan the Terrible cries to heaven for some modification. I mention "heaven," since the French royal family mentioned by Madame Radziwill in this connection thought a good deal of heaven, and having at least three canonized Catholic saints in its ancestry, was believed with reason to stand in well with the empyrean. The Princess is evidently not of this opinion. "Though more civilized," she writes, "the cruelties of the Valois kings in France were [just] as abominable."

Who were the Valois kings? They acceded to the throne about 1327 and were, in their order, Philip VI, John the Good, Charles the Sage, Charles VI, Charles VII, Louis XI, Charles VIII, Louis XII, Francis I, Henry II and, finally, the latter's three sons, who died childless, and were succeeded by the Bourbons, thanks to the well-timed conversion of Henry of Navarre. The list is not very long, and the personalities of these men are illuminated by a good deal of documentation and recent research. We defy the Princess Radziwill, or anyone else, to find in them any traces of the sadism and moral insanity which circles the Romanoff Czar with so red and hateful an aureole. The first four were wholly blameless from the standpoint of cruelty, the last being an amiable lunatic; the only cruel thing recorded of Joan of Arc's Dauphin was permitting Joan to be burned; the reputation of Louis XI was lurid, but has been neatly vindicated by the Catholic writer, Mr. D. B. Wyndham Lewis; Louis XII was called "the father of his people," in a very different sense from that of "Little Czar"; Francis I was notoriously kind-hearted except to rabid Huguenots; his son resembled him. Of the last three, Francis II wept when forced to watch the execution of Huguenot conspirators; the enforced consent of his brother, Charles IX, to the Massacre of St. Bartholomew can count as nothing in comparison with the colossal butcheries of Ivan the Terrible. As for the last Valois, Henry III, whose biography the present writer is attempting, one reads of him that he said apropos of some sanguinary bandit: "My heart bleeds that in my times and under my obedience such cruelties should occur." Somehow this does not sound much like the Romanovs, and is a capital illustration of the point that a Frenchman is not a Russian.

The reviews of the Princess Radziwill are among the most readable being written, and I am disposed to think that an intense preoccupation with her own country has led her into error in the case of this so human but very Catholic family.

Cuthbert Wright.

## BOAT BUILDING

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editor: The business of getting the family craft overboard has put me somewhat behind in my reading, so I have just come upon the editorial, "Boat Building," in the May 18 issue. And I think the writer deserves keelhauling for so grievously confusing the "real sport of sailing" with the antics of a group of pneumonia tempters. Especially when the point he seeks to make is so clearly exemplified elsewhere.

Every charge made against the so-called "sailing machine" can be brought against each boat he mentions. The dinghys are already divided into "classes" and there is considerable discussion as to whether they must pass "towing tests" and what not. Their cost, considering size and type, would compare favorably with their larger sisters. The very naval architects, who in happier days (for

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them) were designing the big rule beaters, are represented in the dinghy fleet and several of the boats are from the boards of English designers of note. Even the gentleman who ballyhooed the Frostbite Yacht Club into its present popularity is publicly sighing for the good old days, when things were not so complicated.

The Snipe International Racing Association spends a great deal of paper and ink warning its members against using outlaw sails and adding expensive refinements. And so on down the line.

What your writer might have pointed out is the large and constantly growing number of boatmen, who are taking advantage of the splendid little cruisers, both sail and power, which are being offered at bargain prices. Many people are, for the first time, realizing the complete relaxation and healthful joys that go with boating. Whole families are going away each week-end, far from the noise and rush of the city, yet only several hours sail from home, with much less expense than they operated a car. And if he only knew, he might have added the difficulties that beset the skipper, who must not only find a safe harbor, to spend Saturday night, but one with a fairly convenient church, so his crew can assist at Mass in the morning.

And here let me call down the blessing of the holy Saint Adjutor, patron of yachtsmen, on the Brothers at Centerport, whose hospitable chapel has welcomed so many Long Island Sound sailors, and where perhaps they shared the thought of Father Speer Strahan:

> "Lo and the sudden altar chime,
> Swings, and the winds outswell,
> . . . The sea, the sea . . . and I seem to hear
> The cry of a ship's bell."

JUDY ANNE MAHONEY.

*All of the above is cogent, evidently written* con amore *and from experience. We hasten to agree that the bargains in cruisers now available are to anyone who has followed the business and sport of boating, history-making. One with full head-room in the cabin, two bunks, a separate toilet room, a convenient place for the galley and a speed of better than fifteen miles an hour, can be had for $1,200. To be sure, this is still a lot of money in any language, but such a boat for city cliff-dwellers provides not only a mobile summer cottage for the week-ends, but also a resort on hot days during the week, for picnic suppers, a moonlight sail and a night's sleep where the air is apt to be cool. There are a number of fine small cruisers in about this price class, up to the extraordinary little ship for $2,400 developed by a well-known Floridian builder that is twin-screw and does thirty miles an hour—fast boating, indeed! Equally amazing are the developments for comfort and speed at moderate cost in the sailing boats. The keelhauled writer of the paragraph is the happy owner of a twenty-two foot "banks dory" with six-foot beam, oak ribs and stem and stern and coaming, and husky pine planking, that cost under a hundred dollars new, without motor. With a "kicker" and a shelter cabin where two people can stretch out and take the allotted hours of rest, it is no doubt a* poverello *of the above writer's sumptuous yacht.—The Editor.*

## CONCERNING SEÑOR RIVERA

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor: May I be permitted to comment on the leader for May 26, "Concerning Señor Rivera"?

You wish to go on record as grateful to Mr. Rockefeller for having momentarily saved the honor of American liberalism in the form to which you subscribe; and you chastise Señor Rivera because it did not occur to him that Mr. Rockefeller had any convictions to which he might be entitled.

I think I can understand and agree with a commendation of uncommon liberalism. I do not think I can agree that Mr. Rockefeller's action is exemplary of the liberalism to which you and, after you, I refer.

The Rivera question is not a simple matter of convictions. On the critical level, it is a question of art and propaganda. Mr. Rockefeller rejects the art because of the propaganda; the liberalism to which I refer does not consider that a sufficient basis for rejection. It believes Communist propaganda qua art may be valuable. The Communist does not believe that; he believes, I think, that today Communist art only may be valuable. And Mr. Rockefeller believes that any art but Communist art may be valuable. On this question, Mr. Rockefeller and the Communist are in the same boat.

Therefore, I am glad that Señor Rivera did not consult Mr. Rockefeller's convictions, and I am sorry that Mr. Rockefeller consulted Señor Rivera's. I believe that for that Señor Rivera is so much the better as artist and Mr. Rockefeller so much the worse as critic.

The question and situation, it seems to me, is exemplary of the need of the liberalism to which I refer and to which, I think, you refer.

WILLIAM D. BURROWS.

## BACK NUMBERS

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editor: I am an original subscriber to "The Catholic Encyclopedia;" also to *America;* also to THE COMMONWEAL. I have been a subscriber to the *Catholic World* for at least twenty years. The problem of what to do with all this material and reference confronts me. I have gone back during the years to these publications, one after another, referring to them, rereading them and have found more pleasure and profit than I can describe. Now the time has arrived when I must decide as to the disposition of such reference.

I can, of course, get rid of it as wastepaper, but I should feel more comfortable for the rest of the few years that may be left me to realize that some Catholic reader will take the trouble to explain how he can make use of these multitudes of back numbers. Then I should deem it a privilege to send them at my own expense to any part of the United States. Identity need not be known. Any communications that may be excited by this announcement, should be addressed to: "CJJJ," P. O. Box 211, City Hall Station, New York, N. Y. The offer hereby made to stand good until July 1.

OCTOGENARIAN.

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# BOOKS

## New Fiction

*Overlord, by Sue Mildred Lee Johnston, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.00.*

*As the Earth Turns, by Gladys Hasty Carroll. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.*

*Solal, by Albert Cohen; translated by Wilfrid Benson. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.40.*

*The Song at the Scaffold, by Gertrud von le Fort; translated by Olga Marx. New York: Henry Holt and Company. $1.25.*

NOVELS can be generally divided into three classes: light fiction, "fiction," and fiction. Of what the first class consists needs little explanation; it is the class of the "thriller," the "romance," the "Western." By his able use of inverted commas (his talent for them will one day be the subject of a paper in "Modern Language Notes"), Wyndham Lewis has pointed out the existence of the second class, in which is included the great bulk of work turned out each year by variously developed talents, applauded by variously developed critics, and on occasion chosen by the book clubs. The last class might be partially explained with examples—the works of Henry James and Mr. Lewis, to follow a suggestion of the latter. Fiction, without the inverted commas, is art, the record of an unusual vision of the world, and destined, at any one time, to no great popularity. Light fiction is designed to entertain in the simplest fashion; it offers an escape from reality for those who want it in the form of a "good story." "Overlord," which is written under an extensive pseudonym by a nun teaching in the Southwest, belongs in this class. There is about it a certain freshness that lends charm to the hackneyed materials of which it is built. The story of the sheep-herder Espiridion and his lovely wife Maria and the villainous Manuel Ortega, with a small mustache and forever tamping his cigarettes, is not always credible, it is not expertly told, but the author's healthy and optimistic view of human nature lends a sincerity to the tale absent, for instance, in the works of Zane Grey and Harold Bell Wright, however sincere these gentlemen may be. In a day when so much popular fiction deals with the weary banalities of sexual experimentation, it is pleasant to come on a story which respects a code not without arguments in its favor.

The clichés of "fiction" are not so obvious as those of light fiction and it has few of the clichés of expression which abound in the latter. It may seem carping criticism to point out the stereotyped matter in so well done a novel as "As the Earth Turns"; yet it is there and hinders the book from being a better one. The book is filled with characters who are familiar in the pages of "fiction"; there is the inarticulate, land-loving farmer, the young girl caring for a large family, the frail boy who must struggle away from the farm for intellectual expression. The merits of the book lie in the love of farm life it shows and its power to convey the gusto of living it to the reader. It is not without significance that much of the tale of the Shaws unfolds around the dining-table; it might be said to have a well-fed contentedness about it, a belief, corroborated by experience, in the value of good baked beans, Indian pudding, doughnuts and apple pies. It is a simple joy in living that the book celebrates; it pictures the pleasure of toil in the fierce sun, under the bitter wind, and over a hot stove; and in asserting the worth of these it commendably sets its face against the gloom which has issued from so many corn furrows, although at the same time it is free of vague mysticism about man's kinship to the earth he works. How many people it will persuade to feel more deeply for the agrarian life in these troubled days is uncertain, for, though Mrs. Carroll uses many of the colloquialisms of her characters in her prose and adopts no tone of superiority toward her creations, one is aware that hers is not the farmer's consciousness and sees New England farm life as a spectacle whose richness is made evident by urban culture; and this, however indirectly, implies the superiority of urban life.

"Solal" is in part "fiction" and in part very good comedy. Its Byronic hero is Solal of the Solals, son of a rabbi on the Greek isle of Cephalonia. Through a series of fantastic adventures, he rises to a position in the French ministry, and then, because of his faithfulness to his race, descends to become a beggar. Solal, so far as he is real, is a verbose and egoistic sensualist and what he says and does, adorned though it may be with the Oriental fury of M. Cohen's rhetoric, is dull, for the whole conception of his character is a romantic bloom which has wilted beyond reviving. Fortunately Solal's relatives are more entertaining than he; they are a queer and assorted tribe, given to unpredictable and, to Occidental minds, illogical actions. They move through the book discharging delightful extravagances of speech and indulging in naive acts ill suited to their grave words. Those five of them who call themselves the Gallants of France are fine creations of humor (in Jonson's sense), and their charm does much to atone for the presence of the book's hero. Like "As the Earth Turns," "Solal" shows a gusto for living, but it is of a noisy kind that must garnish each dish of beans with flowers of fine speech.

Fraülein von le Fort's "The Song at the Scaffold" is an example of an attempt to achieve the last of our classifications. Her theme is the visitation of grace raising human weakness to heroic strength, and this she shows in the life of the pathologically fearful Blanche de la Force, a Carmelite nun at Compiègne during the time of the Terror. Barred by her cowardice from joining her sister nuns in martyrdom at the guillotine, Blanche, who has earlier left the convent, lifts her voice to sing the "Veni Creator" in the midst of the mob about the place of execution as the last of her companions is beheaded. Unfortunately Fraülein von le Fort has not availed herself of the fictional techniques recently developed for the portrayal of psychological subtleties; she has cast her story in the form of a letter from a resident in Paris to an emigré relative, so that the story is limited by the knowledge of the fictional narrator as well as being curtailed by the bounds of its epistolary form. A further defect is of style; there is an attempt to approximate the eighteenth-century way of writing through the use of certain mannerisms but the

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rhythms of the neo-classic age are entirely lacking—which is scarcely evocative of the illusion of reality that might make the tale more moving. "The Song at the Scaffold" is a failure because it posits too great a sympathy on the part of the reader, supposing that the mere mention of particular words will affect the reader in a way which only the subtleties of art can accomplish; however, it points to the subject for a great Catholic novel: a delineation of the wonders of grace by means of the methods which such men as Henry James, Proust and Joyce have perfected for very different phenomena. Of course, saintly autobiography will always be the more authoritative word on this experience, but such a novel would be a surprising, though not basically an anomalous, production in this age of fiction—and "fiction."

GEOFFREY STONE.

## The Doughboy

*B.E.F. The Whole Story of the Bonus Army, by W. W. Waters, as told to William C. White. New York: The John Day Company. $2.50.*

WITH the reappearance of the bonus issue in national politics, it is well to have before us a clear picture of the events of last summer in connection with the veterans' "army" in Washington. The account here given by the commander of the bonus forces can hardly be considered an impartial one, but the statements of Mr. Waters are supported by documents and photographs, they were independently checked by Mr. White, and in themselves they reveal such a remarkably temperate and objective attitude as to carry conviction. The ultimate question as to the justification of the veterans' demands is left undiscussed by Mr. Waters who confines himself in this regard to explaining at the outset the attitude of the three hundred unemployed ex-soldiers of Oregon who began the march feeling that they were at least entitled to as much consideration as the government had shown to the railroads and other corporations in its loans to them.

From this point the book is straight narrative and absorbingly interesting. It takes the men across the continent in box-cars as far as St. Louis from which city, owing to the resistance of the Baltimore and Ohio, the trip was finished with more difficulty in trucks donated from various sources. Commander Waters takes justifiable pride in the good discipline maintained on this long journey without a single act of lawlessness committed by any of the men other than their seizure of transportation. Once arrived in Washington, they were joined by groups from all parts of the country until the total number of unemployed veterans in the city reached the number of twenty-two thousand. That so large a body should have remained for substantially two months without riot or disorder once more reflects credit on their discipline as well as upon the mingled tact and firmness of General Glassford, the Chief of Police. Out of the twenty-two thousand there were about three hundred Communists in the bonus army. They were so roughly treated by the majority when they attempted propaganda that General Glassford himself protested against the "brutality" shown them.


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During these two months President Hoover and Secretary Hurley consistently refused to meet any delegation from the men. The American Legion and the Army and Navy Y.M.C.A. declined to assist in their maintenance, so that the burden of supporting them fell largely upon the local citizens of Washington. The money collected was handled by General Glassford who made large additions from his own pocket. So things dragged along until the defeat of the bonus bill and the adjournment of Congress, the last two days of the session being marked by the "death march" of a separate California contingent around the capitol grounds. The veterans had hoped to catch at least a glimpse of the President of the United States, but Mr. Hoover prudently departed from the usual custom and did not appear for the adjournment. Vice-President Curtis was so terrified by the tramping of the unarmed Californians that he hastily sent for two companies of Marines. Meanwhile the veterans contented themselves with singing "America" and beating up the Communists.

During the ten days after the adjournment of Congress five thousand members of the bonus army went home, and there was every reason to expect the rapid dispersal of the others, when a sudden order came for the eviction of the men within forty-eight hours from the buildings occupied on Pennsylvania Avenue. As General Glassford has testified, "The whole thing had an ugly aspect. The administration was forcing the issue, making a 'surprise attack.'" During the eviction one of the policemen lost his head and shot, killing two veterans. Later came the so-called "riot" in which one policeman was knocked down, terminated by General Glassford's calling out, "How about let's stopping for lunch?" Then came the night attack of the regulars, infantry, cavalry, gas masks, tanks and machine guns, called out by the President against unarmed American citizens, and called out, as both Waters and Glassford maintain, without the slightest necessity.

Mr. Waters's book concludes with the gathering of the stragglers at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, the checkmating by the authorities of his efforts to locate them on land donated for that purpose, and their final dispersal.

ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES.

## How to Think

*Symbolic Logic, by Clarence Irving Lewis and Cooper Harold Langford. New York: The Century Co. $5.00.*

THERE was no comprehensive book on symbolic logic in English written for readers who have no previous training either in logic or in mathematics before Professors Lewis, of Harvard, and Langford, of Michigan, published this work. Of course, there was Bertrand Russell's "Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy." But that book is not one that he who runs may read. The present volume does not precisely presuppose technical training in logic and mathematics but it would make rather difficult reading for one who did not possess at least a bowing acquaintance with algebra and a certain flair for logical analysis. The book purports to be an introduction to symbolic logic but it is so expertly done that anyone

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who reads it carefully and assimilates its contents will surely get much more than a beginner's knowledge of the subject. Professor Lewis's previous volume, "A Survey of Symbolic Logic," justifies his reputation in this field. The present work which combines the experience of two competent teachers of the subject brings the historical treatment down to date and likewise presents theoretical discussions of some new and original points of view.

The ideographic calculus which has become widely known under the name of "logistic" has a respectable history behind it even though its future be precarious. Leibniz seems to have been the originator of the logistic idea through his *calculus ratiocinator*. It was taken up with considerable fervor during the nineteenth century by Boole and Schoeder and later developments came through the work of MacColl, Peirce, Macfarlane, Peano, Bertrand Russell, Whitehead and Padoa. Wittgenstein's "Tractatus Logico-philosophicus" marked a change in direction, which is even more noticeable in the present work. The tendency discernible in most of the previous work on logistics (or mathematical, symbolic or exact logis, as it has been variously called) made for a use of symbols of an algebraic character as a substitute for thoughts rather than as a more convenient and manageable expression of the meaning of ideas. It also treated propositions in such a way as to reveal a decided influence of the Kantian transcendentalism on the theory of knowledge which supported it.

Although the present work is not entirely free of such defects, there is a very decided improvement in the outlook of its authors who explicitly declare: "Propositions are not strings or marks or series of sounds, except incidentally; in essence, a proposition expresses an asserted meaning."

Symbolic logicians seem either to be unaware of the subtle development of logical analysis of mediaeval writers or to be unable to grasp its significance. Otherwise they would surely not indulge in disparagements of ancient logic the way they do. For, after all, many of the difficulties which they find in the Aristotelian analytics have been solved ages ago upon much the same basis as the modern logistician adopts, and the background of most of these early solutions is found in the theory of *suppositio*.

Progress in philosophy never consists in throwing away whatever knowledge has already been accumulated. Books on logic which indulge in wholesale condemnations of Aristotle and the dialecticians of the middle ages as a sort of preface to the now-for-the-first-time-discovered new science of reasoning leaves a bad impression on a reader who is chary of accepting every latest nostrum on the recommendation of the producer.

It is because Lewis and Langford do not follow in this the fashion of their predecessors in the field of symbolic logic that the present book is of much greater value than previous treatises on the subject.

The legitimate aim of symbolic logic—if I understand it aright—is to simplify by the use of signs the complicated expression of logical relations. This is an admirable purpose provided it does not entail the substitution of the symbol for the reality (an evolution so palpably and deplorably prevalent in many other realms of thought today, e.g., paper for money, polish for culture). The traditional


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# Next Week

THE EDUCATIONAL NUMBER is our next and will particularize on its topic, though of course not to the exclusion of events that are shaking or shaping all our worlds. . . . CITY SCHOOL COSTS, by Thomas F. Coakley, draws attention to a publication by the Office of Education of the United States Department of the Interior showing the wide difference in per diem, per capita school operation costs in various cities in various localities and suggests a basis of cold facts for the citizen who may wish to impress on the tax levying body in his community the economy of education elsewhere. . . . THE OXFORD MOVEMENT, by George Joseph Donohue, is a charming commemoration of events, whose centenary is celebrated this July, when a Catholic university pilfered by the Reformation had its second blooming of the Faith and gave to the world and the ages a group of men, and one great man in particular, not insular but truly Catholic. First Oxford itself, then Newman and finally a book wherein Newman detailed the attitude of the Church toward the things of the mind are illuminated by the writer. . . . MEMORIES OF POPE PIUS, by R. Du Chalieu, recounts a vivid, world-embracing interview with the leader of the world's largest and oldest international society, apropos of disruptive forces pitting nation against nation in wounding, destructive struggles.

logical structures are undeniably cumbersome. Symbolic logic ought to be able to make them more supple without sacrificing their content. Lewis and Langford have made what is certainly the best attempt so far but there is yet room for more radical reform of logistic methods, a reform which will banish once and for all the myths of predicate quantification and restore to the judgment its proper function in the existential realm. In other words modern logicians need to recall what modern epistemology labors to make them forget, viz., that judgment is concerned with things conceptually presented and not merely with concepts that have no reference to the realm of reality.

GERALD B. PHELAN.

## Europe's Soul

*The Modern Dilemma, by Christopher Dawson. New York: Sheed and Ward. $1.00.*

CHRISTOPHER Dawson is one of the best modern sociologists, and, although his present book reaches only just over a hundred pages, whatever he says in his compact and closely-reasoned style is potent in moral and ethical significance.

The modern dilemma proceeds of course from the fact that, in a welter of nationalism and economic exploitation which has penetrated and even poisoned the hitherto static cultures of the East, Europe has lost her soul. The wider unity of Western civilization was, in the middle ages, Christendom. But as Mr. Dawson showed in his excellent "Progress and Religion," the last four hundred years of pseudo-progress have weakened the ties of Christian unity and the hold of the Catholic Church upon all human activities in Europe. Yet the spiritual unity of Catholicism—"for without it Christianity would become no more than a mass of divergent opinions dissolving under the pressure of rationalist criticism and secularist culture"—is again to be sought, Mr. Dawson argues, if the social unity of European culture is to be preserved.

Modern Europe's anarchy is best shown by the national particularism raging now on the Continent, which Dawson logically says is suicidal. Hence, Europe must return to a community of interest. It is illogical that, after having given the world all the living forces of modern culture, Europe should commit suicide. Mr. Dawson examines each of the most distinctive forces in its turn. Those forces are four: the Christian ideal, the ideal of humanity (allied to it), the scientific ideal, and the ideal of democracy.

As to democracy, the author believes it is not the only means of securing complete economic equality. State Socialism or pure despotism could secure it as well. In each form of government the idea of aristocracy is an element. But the dilemma today is a "choice between religious and secular ideals or between the spiritual and the materialistic view of life."

Dawson knows the points of the sociological and modern compass as few do. His brilliant pages, here collected as "Essay in Order No. 8," deserve the widest reading and meditation.

JAMES W. LANE.

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*Laicism in the Schools of France, by Sister M. Justine Redmond, Ph. D. Washington, D. C.: Catholic University Press. $1.00.*

"LAICISM in the Schools of France" is a dissertation submitted to the faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the Catholic University of America in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, conferred in June, 1932. The author is a Daughter of Charity and has held an honored position on the faculty of St. Joseph's College, Emmitsburg, Maryland, as director on the State Board of Catholic Education in Maryland, and as supervisor of the Summer Normal Course conducted by the Sisters of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul at Utica, New York. Her essay, fully authenticated and rich in bibliography, offers an exhaustive study of the effect of the *laïque* policy on the schools of France.

About us everywhere are evidences of that insidious and apparently harmless precept of laicism—that religion is a strictly private affair. Through this seeming neutrality, the cumulative force of *laïcité* developed in France a crescendo of individualism, atheism and pantheism till it reached a point where laicism became the "religion of irreligion," where in the Chamber of Deputies, M. Blum stated: "We conceive that in the affair of instruction, the state has not only the capacity but the exclusive right to instruct." At the French Masonic Convention of 1896, Dequaire-Grebel stated: "The end of *l'école laïque* is not to teach reading, writing and ciphering. It is to form free-thinkers." And so, the teaching corps developed Socialists and Communists. In 1912 these syndicates were ordered suppressed but, because of their power, the command was overruled. By 1925 the majority of French educators entered the ranks of the III Internationale.

After fifty years of slow and steady propaganda, *laïcité* provides as legitimate in the public schools of France, a purely rational course in moral education notwithstanding the fact that 87 percent of the population professes the Roman Catholic faith. There had been resistance, but Catholics, unorganized for opposition, were not aware of the energy required. The leaders of laicism realizing the impossibility of reconciliation "between the national school whose cornerstone is reason, and the Catholic school whose cornerstone is faith," have proposed *l'école unique*. In this project, they demand the democratic ideal with all children instructed in the common schools. Should this succeed, it will mean the suppression of *les écoles libres* and the end of liberty of instruction.

In view of the various bills presented to the Congress of the United States, and the efforts of teaching groups to dominate the policy of education, an exposition of the ease with which *laïque* doctrines were disseminated and intensified in France should awaken serious interest in all who are concerned in the full and free education of youth. Since there is very little in English on the subject of laicism, this addition to the research library of the Catholic University of America will prove invaluable.

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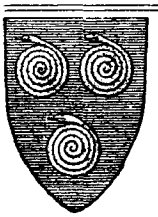
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## Briefer Mention

*Climbing Roses, by G. A. Stevens. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.00.*

MR. STEVENS, co-author of the standard, "How to Grow Roses," now provides an excellent and readable manual for the grower of climbers. These he rightly praises as easy to grow and eager to pay handsome dividends for care expended. The book offers a discussion of varieties and plant history, gives simple directions for culture and training, and appends a useful dictionary which is the best thing of its kind we have seen. There are many illustrations in color. We wish that Mr. Stevens had explained where the varieties could be purchased, and that he had permitted himself a franker expression of opinion concerning newer varieties. But a scientist will hardly consent to do such things, and the author is a scientist.

*The Immortal Sinner, by Mabel Wagnalls. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Company. $1.50.*

THIS volume of fiction is not without literary merit. Although its plots are not extraordinary, its form is unusual. More than half of the contents is based on persons living in the time and country of Christ and the second part recalls modern France. The internal connection is maintained by a highly similar plot in both parts centering about the loss of a loved one, a theft, repentance and edifying death. The idea brought home is that human virtues and perversions change but little as time rolls on. Watching over all is the ever-ready and ever-present merciful God. The book will afford a few hours of delightful reading for those who do not insist on strongly emotional matter of a different type.

*Wind in the East, by Anna Robeson Burr. New York: Duffield and Green. $2.00.*

A YOUNG American girl goes to the Near East and serves as secretary to a novelist and dreamer who is also involved in an attempt to foment a revolution. She has a fairly exciting time, but comes off none the worse for wear if one excepts a modicum of disillusionment. Racily told, the book is fairly good light summer reading.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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